

**Meeting the Literacy Needs Of A Diverse
Group Of Students In The Regular Classroom**

Leah P. Moe

B.A. (Sociology), University of Western Ontario, 1981
B.Ed., University of Western Ontario, 1982

Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfillment Of
The Requirements For The Degree Of
Master Of Education
In
Multidisciplinary Leadership

The University of Northern British Columbia

July 2008

© Leah P. Moe, 2008



Library and
Archives Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-48757-0

Our file Notre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-48757-0

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Abstract

In this qualitative action research study a Grade 2 and 3 teacher gathered, implemented, and assessed the effectiveness of teaching literacy strategies to address the literacy needs of a diverse group of students. An additional purpose of the study was to prompt instruction-focused dialogue with colleagues; the researcher expected that teachers talking about aspects of teaching and learning could be an important first step in the development of a learning community at the school. This self-initiated inquiry led to commitment to a literacy program that is built on the principles of culturally responsive teaching and communicative language teaching. Experiences with colleagues during professional development activities on school and district based initiatives pointed out the challenges associated with school reform. This study may be of interest to classroom teachers, instructional leaders, administrators and school board officials, as a demonstration of the reflective, classroom-based implementation of promising practices in literacy pedagogy and the value of professional conversations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	6
LIST OF TABLES.....	7
LIST OF FIGURES.....	8
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	9
 CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM	10
The Problem.....	10
Purpose of the Study.....	12
Research Questions.....	14
Overview of the Study	14
Learning Circle Model.....	15
Importance of the Study.....	17
Parameters of the Study.....	18
<i>Delimitations</i>	18
<i>Limitations</i>	19
<i>Definition of Terms</i>	20
Summary.....	24
 CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	26
Language Learning and Teaching.....	27

<i>Communicative Language Teaching</i>	28
<i>Social View of Learning</i>	30
<i>ESL/D Education Today</i>	31
Culturally Responsive Teaching.....	33
<i>First Nations Education</i>	35
<i>Instructional Tactics and Strategies</i>	37
<i>Classroom Assessment</i>	38
School Improvement.....	39
<i>Instructional Leadership</i>	40
Implications for Teachers.....	42
Summary.....	42
 CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN.....	 43
Teacher Inquiry and Educational Reform.....	43
Case Study.....	44
<i>Challenges of Case Studies</i>	45
Action Research	45
<i>Combining Ethnographic Case Study Reporting and Action Research</i>	48
<i>Challenges of Action Research</i>	49
Design of the Study.....	51
Consent and Ethical Considerations.....	54
Research Site.....	54
<i>Setting</i>	56

Participants.....	57
<i>Teacher-researcher</i>	57
<i>Students</i>	59
Procedure.....	59
<i>Data Collection Instruments</i>	60
<i>Assessment</i>	61
<i>Reflective Journal</i>	61
<i>Action Step Matrix</i>	62
Summary.....	63
 CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS.....	 64
Awareness.....	65
<i>Goals</i>	66
<i>Creating a Culturally Compatible Classroom</i>	69
<i>Listening and Learning from Students and Parents</i>	70
<i>Culturally Appropriate Curriculum and Materials</i>	71
<i>Scaffolding Instruction</i>	72
<i>Classroom Talk</i>	74
<i>Experiential Learning</i>	75
<i>Culturally Sensitive Participation, Feedback and Assessment</i>	78
<i>Teaching and Learning About Cultural Diversity</i>	82
Meaning Made of Classroom Practice.....	88
<i>Teacher Leadership and Learning Communities</i>	89

<i>School Culture</i>	91
<i>Collegial Conversations</i>	93
<i>Change Processes</i>	95
<i>Re-culturing of Schools</i>	95
Meaning making of School Reform.....	99
<i>Culture and Communication</i>	100
<i>The Impact of Culture</i>	100
<i>The Importance of Communication</i>	101
Summary.....	101
CHAPTER V: REFLECTIONS AND COMMITMENTS.....	103
REFERENCES.....	107
APPENDIX A	Summary of Appreciative Inquiry.....116
APPENDICES B & C	Instructional Inventories.....117
APPENDIX D	Reflective Journal.....121
APPENDICES E, F & G	Action Step Matrices.....122
APPENDICES H, I, J & K	Information Letter and Consent Forms.....125
APPENDIX L	Bader Unfinished Sentences.....129
APPENDIX M	ESD Strategies.....130
APPENDIX N	Classroom Model for Teaching and Learning.....132
APPENDIX O	Classroom Artifacts.....133

LIST OF TABLES

1. Student Feedback of Favorite Activities.	85
2. Peabody Stanine Scores for the School Year 2006-2007.....	87

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Principles of Second Language Learning.....	29
2. Data Collection and Analysis Strategies.....	62
3. Knowledge and Respect for Culture Continuum.....	84

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Willow Brown, for her guidance and commitment, along with my committee members, Dr. Colin Chasteauneuf and Dr. Ross Hoffman, for their feedback and suggestions. I would also like to thank Pat Hanson and Marlene Eccles, ESL/D colleagues who generously shared their resources and expertise with me and served as critical friends throughout this process. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my family who showed their support by helping, encouraging and providing me with comedic relief.

CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM

“The limits of my language are the limits of my life”

(Wittgenstein, as cited in Gibbons, 1991, p.116)

Canada is a country that continues to welcome immigration. This factor combined with the movement of First Nations people from reserves to towns has resulted in a greater number of students identified as English as a Second Language and English as a Second Dialect (ESL/D) learners in BC public schools. These demographic changes present new challenges and opportunities for governments, school boards and public school educators throughout BC and beyond. Provincial ministry or district policy responses are not the only adaptation required. When student demographics such as language, culture and family income patterns change in schools, teachers must adapt existing instructional strategies and classroom programs to meet the needs of students from diverse backgrounds.

The Problem

Changing demographics have resulted in an increasing number of students identified as ESL/D in public schools across the province of British Columbia. According to Immigration Canada, 262,236 people immigrated to Canada in 2005 with 17 % of the immigrants settling in B.C. It is projected that by 2011 B.C. will have more than 60,000 new immigrants and 24 % of which will be children and youth. Today, approximately one in ten BC students takes ESL classes. The majority of the second language learners are attending schools in urban areas including Vancouver, Surrey, Richmond, Burnaby and Abbotsford. However, numbers are increasing in other areas of the province such as

the northern interior district of Prince George which had approximately 1300 ESL/D students in 2005-2006 (BCSTA, 2007). The Aboriginal population is growing six times faster than the rest of the country due to a higher birth rate, more people identifying themselves as Aboriginal and a greater number of reserves participating in the census (Statistics Canada, 2006). With the provincial government's restructuring of educational funding to school districts, the 2006 teachers' contract limiting class size and the number of special education students in a class, school boards have reduced funding to many of the support programs, including ESL/D. A report prepared by the ESL Provincial Specialist Association (Wild, Helmer, Tanaka & Dean, 2006) describes the current situation as a crisis in ESL education. As the number of ESL/D students has increased, the support programs designed to meet the needs of second language learners have been reduced. Fewer Language Specialists are left to teach programs and serve as resource people to classroom teachers, who may be struggling to teach language skills and the prescribed learning outcomes simultaneously to students with different levels of English proficiency. In order to deal with reduced funding and teacher shortages some districts have created a Resource Team Model in which Learning Assistance specialists and ESL specialists are supporting students with a wide range of learner needs beyond their specific specialist training. In some situations positions are filled with teachers who have no specialist training at all. Traditional teaching methods have focused on deficiencies and error correction. Teachers who are not familiar with students' cultures and languages may not be sensitive to the linguistic differences and underestimate the abilities of these students. The situation in BC is not unique. An exploration of the literature on second

language learners uncovers similar difficulties in other parts of Canada, and elsewhere.

Lessow-Hurley (2003) explained:

The pressing demands of schooling large numbers of second language learners often outweigh theoretical considerations. As a result, simplistic notions of language and language development are all too often at the heart of both the politics and programs for students who don't speak English. (p.15)

The Purpose of the Study

This study describes one teacher's approach to addressing the chasm between funding to support ESL/D students and the classroom reality of many more students who could benefit from the strategies and approaches recommended for use in English Skills Development programs. For the purpose of this paper, ESD will refer to Aboriginal, ethnic or recent immigrant students receiving English Skills Development. As a classroom teacher for a linguistically diverse group, I explored ESD principles and strategies for implementation in my classroom. With over half of my class having Punjabi or First Nations linguistic backgrounds, there was a need for me to develop and implement foundational and specific understandings of language development for second language learners. I wanted to provide language support in the classroom in addition to the two hours a week of service the students received in the ESD pull-out program. I hoped to improve the students' performance in speaking/listening, reading, and writing and narrow the achievement gap that existed between many of the second language learners and their classmates.

An action research study provided the means to survey the literature, identify promising practices, and explore and document their implementation with this particular group of students. Appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1990), a philosophical epistemological orientation, ranging from dreaming and designing to rational, technical planning, was used to launch the inquiry. This process helped me to recognize the strategies and approaches that were working well and also the areas of the literacy program that needed attention.

Beyond enhancing my own instructional skills in literacy to better accommodate the different levels of English proficiency within my Grade 2 and 3 classroom, I hoped to generate knowledge of implementation that could then be shared with colleagues who have similar teaching contexts and concerns. Such sharing is important because the increasing number of second language learners in the province and the reduction of ESD support in schools has increased classroom teachers' responsibility to address the learning needs of ESD students. Further, I intended that the inquiry and the subsequent sharing of knowledge regarding implementation of innovations in a local context would increase teacher dialogue and ultimately help to increase capacity for a learning community in the school and district. That is, the thesis documents the efforts of one teacher to embrace teacher leadership and may provide a model for others to initiate self-managed professional development to address areas of need identified in their classrooms.

Research Questions

In this study I investigated the following three questions:

1. How do I currently address the literacy learning needs of the students in my classroom?
2. What instructional approaches can I use to further accommodate the different levels of English proficiency of my students without compromising the instruction for students at grade level?
3. How can this inquiry be conducted and shared in a way that will facilitate teacher leadership and increase the learning community capacity of the school or the district?

Overview of the Study

The theoretical framework for this study is a neo-Vygotskian (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000) view of learning. The process of inquiry is a key aspect of social constructivist theory. Teachers, through reflection, collaboration and interaction with colleagues, make sense of learning and teaching and together move forward in pursuit of common goals.

My exploration of the literature began with the British Columbia Ministry of Education policy documents and The Aboriginal Education and English as a Second Language guidelines for students and teachers. An article written by members of the English as a Second Language Provincial Specialist Association (Wild et al., 2006) outlined what they called a “crisis in E.S.L. education” in B.C. schools. The need to understand the theory behind language instruction led me to the field of language

pedagogy. Several of the readings (Brown, 2001; Lessow-Hurley, 2003; Thompson, 2006) provided recommendations for literacy instruction founded on research conducted over the last two decades. Because language and culture are so closely connected I was drawn to the literature on culturally responsive instruction (Au, 2001; Crago, 1992; Gay, 2000; Leavitt, 1992; Shade, Kelly & Oberg, 1997). The emphasis on assessment that leads to instructional decision-making prompted me to further reading in this area (Earl, 2006). Examination of a number of action research projects demonstrated the power of teacher inquiry, as well as the limitations of this approach (Raptis & Fleming, 2005; Slutsky, 2005). Literature on learning communities (Mitchell & Sackney, 2001) and instructional leadership (Glanz, 2006; Grisham, 2000) assisted me as I considered developing my role as a teacher leader in the school and district.

Classroom action research, the method chosen for the inquiry, is appropriate to this theoretical framework because it invites teachers to construct, reflect and share knowledge within their own schools and classrooms. It can be characterized as a form of naturalistic inquiry (Creswell, 2005) because it is carried out in a natural setting with systematic implementation and observation in a classroom.

The Learning Circle Model

The learning circle model (Brown, 2004; Davy & Brown, 2007), the approach to action research I used for this study, aligns with my belief in schools as learning communities (Mitchell & Sackney, 2001) where people are committed to learning and growing. The four stages of the learning circle approach to action research are identified as *Wholeness, Awareness, Meaning, and Commitment* (Davy & Brown, 2007). The

Wholeness stage involves setting a goal that is described as a vision or ideal that an individual teacher has for her own learning and teaching performance. It requires an acknowledgement that a problem exists, a situation described by Senge (2006) as the difference between what you have and what you want. This *creative tension* or discomfort creates an opportunity for learning. McDonald (as cited in Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999 describes teacher learning as “breaking professional silence” p. 280) by sharing concerns with others, seeking help, searching for answers and new ways of teaching in various strands of related literature and other available resources. In the Awareness and Meaning stages, the researcher identifies promising practices and begins implementation, observation, and reflection concurrently with the collection and analysis of data. In the final stage, Commitment, the researcher makes a commitment to new practices, further inquiry and sharing with others. The goal of the inquiry process is to empower teachers and enhance professional practice.

In surveying the literature I was able to identify promising practices in literacy instruction and create a vision of a literacy program that would meet the needs of a diverse group of students within a community learning through collegiality. As I added to my knowledge of second language learning and teaching, I tried some of the research informed strategies and collected data to assess changes in students’ attitude and achievement. Using a reflective journal (Appendix D) and an action step matrix (Appendix E) to document the implementation of new strategies and record critical incidents (Newman, 1987), events that made either a significant positive or negative impact on the study, I made sense of my work and the results. I then incorporated those strategies that I considered to be successful into my instructional inventory (Appendix C).

An “ethnographic eye” (Creswell, 2005) was used in my interpretation of the data as culture impacted the study with respect to the cultural diversity in the classroom and to the beliefs, values and attitudes of teachers in the school. The results are presented using a case study format in which reflections are summarized in a narrative that includes citations from field notes, the action step matrices, and the reflective journal entries. Finally, as the study progressed I shared my discoveries with interested colleagues through informal conversations and workshops.

Importance of the Study

In the planning stage, I identified three potential benefits of the study. First, it would give me an opportunity to inform and improve my practice with ESD learners through the process of teacher inquiry. I expected that a refined knowledge base in language learning and a repertoire of instructional strategies demonstrated elsewhere to be effective could enable me to further accommodate different levels of English proficiency. Secondly, through collaboration and experimentation with colleagues who face similar teaching challenges, I hoped to work toward creating a collegial school culture or learning community (Mitchell & Sackney, 2001). Barth (2001) describes, “the classic hallmarks of collegiality - talking about practice, sharing craft knowledge, rooting for the success of others, observing others in their work” (p. # 96).

Finally, using a bottom-up approach to school reform (Raptis & Fleming, 2005) this study may be a catalyst for change in our district or other school districts addressing similar issues. It may draw attention to the need for a long-term consistent approach for teaching our ESD students and invite further exploration of the most promising programs

and practices for our students. During the time that I have researched and conducted this study I have seen an increased focus on oral language in the recently revised curriculum as well as in literacy initiatives in our district. With the emphasis on accountability for school districts, I believe that the results of this study point to the need for administrators and school board officials to invest in their teachers, the people who support second language learners, and help them to prepare all of their students to fulfill their potential in society.

Parameters, Limitations and Definitions

The parameters of the study are provided in the following delimitations.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this research include:

1. The study was delimited to one classroom, in one professional community, in one school district.
2. It would have been difficult to identify or isolate specific strategies or techniques that contribute substantially to a difference in student achievement, and such identification was beyond the scope of the study. Inferences about promising practices were made through classroom observation, assessment data and personal communication with the students. Instructional decisions were based on students' knowledge, skills and interests.
3. I selected the strategies and the assessments to be used, with an emphasis on formative assessment that leads to instructional decision making.

4. The study was limited due to time factors. I began the classroom implementation of the study during the months of May and June of 2007. Based on my preliminary reflections, I continued my research from September to December of 2007 implementing strategies that I believed had been successful with a new group of students.

Limitations

The limitations of this research include:

1. The analysis of data was limited by the reflective ability of the researcher.

Reflections presented here represent my understanding at a specific point in time within a period of ongoing professional learning.

Not all growth can be attributed to changes in instructional practice. Normal growth that is expected for a child over a school year also had an impact on teacher reflection and decision making. The data are not generalizable to other settings.

However, the information and processes may be useful in other settings with reflective adaptation.

Regardless of these challenges to the research, the identification of a problem and the search for solutions through research, reflection and improvements to instructional practice, for me, far outweighed the possible limitations and delimitations of the study. As a teacher of students of culturally and economically diverse backgrounds, I wanted to examine my current program to ensure implementation of strategies and approaches recommended for ESD students. In the process and reporting, I have modeled reflective practice for other teachers and contributed, as an informal instructional leader, to a

culture of professional inquiry, a key component in building capacity for a learning community.

Definition of Terms

A review of the literature revealed several terms specific to ESL/D language learners in addition to specialized names for skills, programs, teaching principles, methods, and assessment in the area of language pedagogy.

Additive bilingual refers to a person who has learned a second language in addition to a native language (Lessow-Hurley, 2003).

Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) refers to one of two different types of English. BICS or social English is acquired more quickly than academic English and a person may be able to manage socially within two or three years of being introduced to a new language.

Bidialectism is an approach that builds on students' first language or dialect knowledge and shows them the difference between their speech and the English required for academics (Epstein & Xu, 2003).

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) refers to academic English, which is the language needed to succeed in a school context. It may take several years for someone to learn academic English.

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is the widely accepted approach in the field (Brown, 2001). This method is learner-centered and the emphasis is on communication in

real-life situations. While grammar is still important in CLT, it is intertwined with the use of language for meaningful purposes.

Conscious competence is one of four stages of competence that you may pass through in the process of progressing from incompetence to competence of a skill (Howell, 1982).

Critical incident is a learning opportunity that comes from a small everyday, ongoing occurrence in the classroom. It can be a positive or negative experience that causes a teacher to analyze a situation and explore underlying assumptions about one's learning and teaching (Newman, 1987).

Dialects are versions of a language with variations in word, pronunciation, grammatical structures and word meaning, often associated with geographical regions or population groups. There are many dialects of English spoken in Canada that are different from, but not inferior to, standard English, the dialect used in mainstream institutions such as the news media and schools (Wright, 2008).

Ethnicism is a form of prejudice exercised against nondominant cultures. It is the conscious or unconscious denial of a person's cultural ways (Crago, 1992).

Ethnographic study is a study that is concerned with the cultural context. For example, an ethnographic study of a classroom would include description of the community at large, history of neighborhood, community's racial and ethnic makeup, attitudes of parents and socioeconomic factors. In an ethnographic study the researcher must understand how biases or subjectivity shape the investigation and findings (Merriam, 1998).

An ESD student or “A student of Aboriginal ancestry”, for the purpose of the BC Ministry of Education funding policy, is defined as a school-age student who has self-identified being of Aboriginal ancestry (First Nations, status and non-status Metis; and Inuit). Aboriginal identification must be made on a voluntary basis (BC Ministry of Education Policy Document, 2002). In some literature ESD refers to English Skills Development. For the purpose of this study and in this thesis I will be using the term ESD to refer to any student receiving support in the English language.

ESL students are those students whose primary language(s) or the language spoken at home is other than English and who may therefore require additional services in order to develop their individual potential within the BC school system (BC Ministry of Education Policy Document, 2002).

First Nations is a Canadian term for Aboriginal people. According to Stiffarm (1998) “‘First’ denotes primacy; ‘Nation’ indicates that the people were organized into social, political and economic groups with distinct cultures and languages and lands; and the plural form denotes diversity of these groups.” (p.viii).

First-Order change is doing more or less of something we are already doing. First order change is always reversible (e.g., improving the technical, instructional activities of a school through close monitoring of teachers’ and students’ classroom work). Second-Order Change is deciding, or being forced to do something significantly or fundamentally different from what you have done before. The process is irreversible: once you begin, it is impossible to return to the way you were doing before (e.g., building a shared vision,

improving communication, and developing collaborative decision-making processes) (Leithwood, 1992).

Instructional inventory is a graphic representation of a teacher's instructional repertoire (Bennett & Rolheiser, 2001); the strategies and methods that can be used for self-assessment and goal-setting purposes.

Instructional leadership refers to guidance and modeling of good practices that promote student learning by an educator (principal or teacher) who is knowledgeable in curriculum, teaching practices and new research (Glanz, 2006).

Knowledge-of-practice is knowledge that is generated when teachers treat their own classrooms and schools as sites for intentional investigation at the same time that they treat the knowledge and theory produced by others as generative material for interrogation and interpretation (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

Learning community a holistic ideal of a healthy school, adaptive and responsive to community needs, in which members work and learn together (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000; Brown, 2004) with a commitment to shared goals, shared leadership, and shared power.

Learning organization is a group of people working to meet organizational goals of growth, productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. Learning is a tool to support organizational processes and efficiencies and ongoing improvement. It is a business improvement concept widely applied to education, with an emphasis on self-renewal through collaborative learning and a systems view of the interdependence of organizational factors. (Senge, 1990/2006).

Naturalistic inquiry is research carried out in a natural setting, situation or environment (Creswell, 2005).

Pull-out is one of the program models currently in use in BC public schools to provide support for ESL/D students, in which, for possibly one period a day, students leave their regular classrooms and attend an ESL/D class.

Resource Team (RT) model is comprised of a number of specialist teachers, such as Learning Assistance, ESL, and Special Education specialists who are assigned to classrooms to support any students identified as having additional learning needs.

Submersion model simply places ESL students in a class at their age/grade level and it is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to support the language, content and cultural learning of these students.

Subtractive bilingual is a person who has replaced a first language with a new one. The first language is undeveloped or lost (Lessow-Hurley, 2003).

Summary

This chapter introduces a qualitative, naturalistic inquiry designed to address the literacy needs of a diverse group of students. An overview of the theoretical framework, literature review and method for the study has been provided, featuring the learning circle model (Davy & Brown, 2006), a classroom action research approach designed to integrate research and experience in reflective practice. Parameters of the study are stated and terms specific to the study were defined. The remainder of the thesis includes Chapter II, a literature review used to inform the study; Chapter III, a description of the

research design with site, participants and procedures; Chapter IV, data analysis; and Chapter V, reflections and future commitments.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I explore several avenues of current literature to inform my study. This review is not meant to be an exhaustive listing of all that is known in a field, but a drawing together of various fields of study relevant to the solution of a specific problem that became evident in my teaching practice. Teaching in a classroom where approximately half of the students qualified for *English Skills Development* and a desire to narrow the literacy achievement gap between students from homes where only English is spoken and other learners led me to explore two general topics: language pedagogy and professional learning.

First, to address the questions related to my literacy teaching practice I examined the current pedagogy of language, which led to literature on communicative language teaching; Neo-Vygotskian theory; BC Ministry of Education policy and practices for ESL and ESD education; and culturally responsive teaching, including First Nations Education. This initial survey of the literature informed me of the knowledge, skills and dispositions required to be a competent teacher of ESD students, in addition to the importance of creating a classroom environment and providing instruction to enhance the literacy learning of a diverse group of students. The role of dialogue in teaching and learning, which is founded in Neo-Vygotskian theory, and the view of language as a cultural tool for learning were most informative and promising. I drew from this literature to create a vision for a literacy program that integrated the theory of social constructivism (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000) with the creation of culturally responsive classrooms (Shade, Kelly, & Oberg, 1997), culturally responsive instruction (Gay, 2000), and culturally responsive feedback. I evaluated my current practice using an appreciative inquiry

(Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1990) into existing practices and moved toward my vision of creating a more culturally responsive environment and curriculum through the implementation of promising instructional strategies that had been found effective elsewhere with diverse groups of students. A closer look at the role of assessment and evaluation in the learning process provided me with the background needed to use assessment to determine the students' literacy needs and to direct my instruction.

Second, I explored the literature on action research for school improvement, which provided me with the theory and method of teacher research used in the study. I pondered my ability to raise the literacy levels in my classroom given my new knowledge of the theory underlying language instruction and effective teaching approaches. My interest in learning for both students and teachers directed me to the literature on the role of an instructional leader (Fullan, 2002; Glanz, 2006) as a change agent within a school and a catalyst for the creation of a learning community (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000). The literature on instructional leadership also addressed the research question of teacher leadership and development of learning communities, specifically how teacher inquiry can lead to informal instructional leadership.

Language Learning and Teaching

The literature on language pedagogy informed me of the underlying principles of teaching second language learners that are evident in communicative language teaching and a constructivist learning approach. During the review of the literature I encountered culturally responsive instruction and promising tactics and strategies to assist in the language development of all students.

Communicative Language Teaching

A constructivist view argues that language learning is both collaborative and exploratory. There are many ways to teach language; however, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a widely accepted approach in this field. This method is learner-centered and the emphasis is on communication in real-life situations. Brown (2001) used the term *communicative competence* to describe this approach to language teaching. The goal of the language classroom is to strike a balance among language use and usage, fluency and accuracy, and classroom learning and communication in the real world. The teacher serves as a facilitator and students are encouraged to direct more of their own learning, making studies more meaningful because they connect with students' existing knowledge. Effective language teaching combines basic principles of learning and reflective classroom practice.

Terms associated with the CLT approach are *learner-centered instruction*, *cooperative* and *collaborative learning*, *interactive learning*, *content-based instruction*, and *task-based instruction*. Brown (2001) identified several principles of second language learning that form the core of an approach to language teaching. The principles that have relevance to this study and were implemented in the classroom can be seen in Figure 1.

<u>Meaningful learning</u> : Learning that connects with students' existing knowledge and background.
<u>Strategic Investment</u> : Methods that the learner uses to internalize and to perform in the language, such as learning styles and strategies.
<u>Risk-Taking</u> : Successful language learners are those who will take the necessary risks to try out the new language and ask questions.
<u>Language-Culture Connection</u> : language teaching also involves teaching cultural customs, values, and ways of thinking, feeling and acting.
<u>Interlanguage</u> : Second language learners go through systematic stages of acquisition which requires both affective feedback from teachers as well as feedback on errors.
<u>Communicative Competence</u> : The goal of a language classroom is to strike a balance between language use and usage, fluency and accuracy, the classroom learning and communication in the real world.
<u>Self-Confidence</u> : A learner's belief that he or she can accomplish a task is an important factor in their success.

Figure 1. Brown's (2001) Principles of Second Language Learning

As research in the field of second language learning has grown, an eclectic approach to language learning and teaching has become common. Nunan (1991, as cited in Brown, 2001) summarized the history of language teaching:

It has been realized that there never was and probably never will be a method for all, and the focus in recent years has been on the development of classroom tasks and activities that are consonant with what we know about second language

acquisition, and which are also keeping with the dynamics of the classroom itself.
(p. # 40)

Social View of Learning

The Neo-Vygotskian or constructivist theory of learning is widely accepted in the field of education. Fosnot (1996) describes constructivist theory as follows:

Constructivism is a theory about knowledge and learning; it describes both what “knowing” is and how one “comes to know.” Based on work in psychology, philosophy, and anthropology, the theory describes knowledge as temporary, developmental, nonobjective, internally constructed, and socially and culturally mediated. Learning from this perspective is viewed as a self-regulatory process of struggling with the conflict between existing personal models of the world and discrepant new insights, constructing new representations and models of reality as a human meaning-making venture with culturally developed tools and symbols, and further negotiating such meaning through cooperative social activity, discourse, and debate. (p. 2)

The constructivist view of learning is drawn from the work of Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist who saw human development as social rather than individualistic. Learning is seen as collaborative and requires the participation of others as one discovers personal connections and makes sense of new information. Students, like teachers, bring with them to school a background of social and cultural experiences that influence their orientation and ability to learn. This study demonstrates the importance of establishing relationships in order for students and teachers to make meaning together in a classroom

and a school; the study also emphasizes the impact of culture on learning in both settings. Based on neo-Vygotskian epistemology and the belief that interaction is at heart of learning, a variety of contexts and approaches that acknowledge individual differences and learning styles are needed for both teachers and students. By engaging in productive dialogue members of school communities can enhance their understanding and spark inquiry within the classroom and the school.

ESL/D Education Today

School programs provide language support for students who are new immigrant learners, children of second-generation immigrants (ESL), and Aboriginal learners (ESD). Each group of students has unique learning needs. Immigrant families who have chosen to come to Canada accept that they need to learn English, the dominant language, to succeed in school and integrate into society. They are motivated to learn a second language because they see it as instrumental to their future success (Burnaby, 1987). First Nations people have diverse social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and the children are growing up in a variety of contexts. Some speak Aboriginal languages, an English dialect or standard English. With standard English being the medium of instruction in schools, the aim is to help these students become *bi-dialectical*. That is, to teach them to identify the differences between their home language system and the English required for school. Part of the dialectical approach is to make students aware that the linguistic differences are not deficits and to instill in the students the importance of maintaining their own dialect or language (Epstein & Xu, 2003). In contrast to some ESL learners, the

ESD students are already English speakers and do not possess the same motivation to learn the dialect of English used in books and school.

Academic English can take several years to learn, leaving many students unable to meet expected outcomes of the provincial curriculum. Research on second language acquisition (Brown, 2001; Lessow-Hurley, 2003; Richard-Amato & Snow, 1992) claims that a person learns social English much more quickly than academic English. Ideally, all ESL/D students should be supported by ESL specialists who have been specifically trained and are knowledgeable in the theory underlying language instruction and the promising practices for second language learners (BC Ministry of Education). However, in reality, the growing number of ESL/D students in the BC schools and the shortage of trained ESL specialists have created some situations in which teachers without basic qualification in any specialist area are attempting to support ESL/D students.

Naturally, as the student caseloads of ESL/D teachers increase, the amount of support each student receives decreases. Funding and teacher allocation for ESL/D resources are based on registration at the beginning of the year. Students who register after this time do not receive funding and support is not always readily available. In urban areas, where groups of ESL students are too large and students in classes display a wide range of English proficiency, effective and efficient learning is jeopardized. In rural school districts where there are low numbers of ESL students, children may receive as little as one period of support every two weeks. However, a student is considered to have received one year of service each year he/she is registered in an ESL/D program, regardless if he or she receives several periods of support each week, or as little as one period every two weeks. This is a cause for concern because in 1997 the Ministry of

Education placed a five-year cap on funded support for second language learners. Finally, because the funds are not targeted, school districts are not required to show how ESL/D funds are spent, leaving this decision to the discretion and goodwill of district and school principals.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally responsive teaching begins with an examination of one's own attitudes and assumptions regarding students from non-mainstream backgrounds including children from low-income, First Nations and non-English speaking families. Teachers need to be aware that traditional programs do not meet the needs of second language learners and look at how they address culture in their classrooms. By adapting the curriculum, the instructional strategies and environment, teachers can provide a context in which all students benefit. Specific to the interest of this study is a 1997 case study in which Garcia (as cited in Lessow-Hurley, 2003) found that effective teachers of second language learners use active, cooperative and multicultural approaches, and hold high expectations for their students.

Cross-cultural differences in communication can lead to misunderstandings between teachers and their students. Katherine Au (2001) illustrated the differences in children coming from mainstream backgrounds and those from culturally or ethnically diverse families by arguing that children from mainstream backgrounds generally have been raised to value individual achievement and are more comfortable raising their hands to be called upon and speaking in front of the class. In contrast, research has shown that Hawaiian children prefer to work cooperatively with their peers to construct answers

(Boggs, 1972 as cited in Au, 2001). In the same vein, research with Native American children has revealed that those students in the studies preferred not to be singled out and would rather respond in a small group when working with peers or during an individual conference with the teacher (Erickson & Mohatt, as cited in Au, 2001). In Inuit culture children learn by listening and observing, rather than through a transmission style of teaching that relies on questions and answers (Crago, 1992). A culturally responsive approach allows for different forms of class participation, such as students constructing answers with peers, rather than on their own, before responding to teacher-posed questions (Au, 2001). It allows students opportunities to demonstrate their learning through dialogue with a partner, conferences with the teacher and in small groups.

Culturally responsive instruction aimed at improving the literacy achievement of students of diverse backgrounds encourages students to make connections to their home cultures. The thinking behind this approach is to build upon the strengths that students bring from their home cultures. Cummins (as cited in Epstein & Xu, 2003) explains:

When bilingual students are instructed, explicitly or implicitly, to leave their language at the schoolhouse door, they are also being told that everything they have learned from parents and grandparents up to this point in their lives has no value; the language through which they have expressed themselves up to this point in their lives has no value and must be replaced by a superior model. In such classrooms, human potential is being diminished. (p. 5).

Researchers in the field of First Nations education and teaching English as a second language (Toohey, 1992; Flores, Cousins-Teft & Diaz, 1991) raise the point that schools fail to acknowledge that many ESL/D students are bilingual and may have developed

fluency and literacy in their first language. Ideally the best medium for teaching students is in their own minority language, but this is not feasible in a school system staffed with primarily English-speaking teachers. Instead the schools identify and label the students on what they do not know. Second language has been regarded as an obstacle rather than an asset to students' learning. On the contrary, according to Brown (2001) first-language development facilitates second language learning in that there is an underlying system which is common across languages despite differences in their surface features of sound, vocabulary and grammar. Reading also involves similar processes in all languages. Teachers need to heighten their awareness of language and culture in order to address the needs of their students and facilitate learning. Culturally responsive teaching is consistent with the principle of meaningful learning found in the CLT model of language teaching in which learning connects with students' existing knowledge and background. Materials and methods addressing immigrant students may not be appropriate for First Nations learners, however, culturally responsive instruction for one group can offer an alternative for others (Leavitt, 1991).

First Nations Education

Historically, Canada's government policy of assimilation instituted through the Indian Act, residential schools and the establishment of reserves was a destructive influence on the culture and language of indigenous people (BCTF, 2006). This cultural disruption to Aboriginal families, communities and education manifests itself today. Poverty, family dysfunction, culture shock, racism, Eurocentric teaching methodologies

and low expectations are some of the barriers that stand in the way of Aboriginal success in public schools.

Although there is a moral commitment on the part of the Canadian government to restore native languages and culture through education, the resources are limited. Canada's First Nations cultures are very diverse in terms of history, customs, traditions and languages (Alberta Education, 2005). Burnaby (1987) emphasizes the unique challenge of preserving native languages in Canada given that most native languages are not standardized with one writing system, spellings of words and dialect. In the Cariboo-Chilcotin School District funding is provided for three local heritage languages to be taught in the schools, however, programs lack professional teachers, curriculum, resources and materials.

Some First Nations students may not have the motivation to learn to speak their ancestral language, an important aspect of culture (Epstein & Xu, 2003). Others may see no social value in learning a second dialect, standard English, the language of school. In order for students to want to learn another language or dialect the teachers must be able to help them discover the benefits to their feelings of self-worth and future success.

The problem of lower-than-average achievement of First Nations students needs to be addressed through the professional development of teachers and administrators. Knowledge of the Aboriginal history and culture of the local community can assist teachers to choose culturally appropriate materials and methods that reflect an understanding of the relationship between language, cultural identity and learning. The BC Ministry of Education (1998) published the Shared Learnings Resource Guide as a tool for integrating Aboriginal content into the British Columbia curriculum. Shared

Learnings is organized by grade level and includes prescribed learning outcomes for subject areas and provides aboriginal content, instructional strategies and recommended resources.

Bockern, Brendtro & Brokenleg, experts in the field of youth at risk, (as cited by Wilson, 1999) outline four principles based on Aboriginal values that are effective with all youth, *belonging, mastery, independence and generosity*. There are as well, districts in the province that have developed curriculum and adopted practices that are built around these core cultural values. This approach facilitates the cultural continuity of First Nations history, language and traditions in the education system rather than treating all students as if they were members of a dominant mainstream culture.

Instructional Tactics and Strategies

During my review of the literature on second language learners, culturally responsive instruction, and effective schools I discovered several common approaches and strategies that enhance the learning achievement of all students in general and, in particular, students of diverse backgrounds. These include: a) teachers setting high expectations for all students; b) the creation of a classroom environment where students are encouraged and motivated to communicate with each other through constructivist and cooperative learning strategies; c) teachers acting as facilitators in a learner-centered classroom with activities that are meaningful and relevant to the students' backgrounds and cultural needs; and, d) teachers who have an understanding of and sensitivity to diverse cultures, values and belief systems. Specific strategies that correspond to these

recommendations were included in an instructional inventory from which I selected classroom techniques aimed at better meeting the needs of my ESD students.

Classroom Assessment

Effective teachers assess with a purpose in mind. Earl (2006) has identified three purposes of assessment; (1) *assessment for learning*, also known as formative assessment, that provides opportunities for teachers to determine what their students are learning and what areas need reteaching or further attention; (2) *assessment as learning*, which requires students to become actively involved in their own learning, with teacher guidance for metacognitive processes such as reflection, self-assessment, goal-setting; and (3) *assessment of learning*, or summative assessment, which measures students' achievement at any point in time or the end of a unit or year with respect to prescribed learning outcomes.

Increased attention has been given to assessment for learning at both district and provincial levels. Classroom assessment that informs teachers of the knowledge, skills and beliefs of their students and is used to plan instruction, monitor student progress, and provide ongoing feedback, is both effective and of high quality. During my review of the literature on classroom assessment I came upon sample assessment tools for ESL learners for oral language, reading and writing (Brownlie, Feniak & McCarthy, 2000, Law & Eakes, 2000).

School Improvement

Garcia (1997 research cited in Lessow-Hurley, 2003) established a relationship between the effectiveness of teachers and characteristics of dedication, confidence, and a lack of complacency. Thompson (2006) summarized the literature on English Language Learning (ELL) by stating:

While the research does not confirm one best way to teach all ELL students, it does emphasize the importance of classroom teachers having a core of understandings and using a variety of effective instructional strategies to flexibly support ELL student achievement. (p. 3)

Five decades ago an American sociologist, Coleman (as cited by Raptis & Fleming, 2005), conducted a study examining factors that affect student achievement. His research concluded that out-of-school factors such as socio-economic status and diversity make a greater difference in student achievement than in-school factors, such as programs, teachers, and material resources. In an attempt to disprove Coleman's theory and allay public criticism, numerous studies by researchers such as Edmonds, Brookover, and Lezotte were conducted in the period of 1966-76 and 1980's to identify characteristics of high-achieving schools. This *effective schools* research has had significant impact on current approaches to school improvement. As Haycock (2001; as cited in Raham, 2001) stated:

A decade ago we didn't know how much this mattered. We believed what students learned was largely a factor of their family income or parental education, not of what schools did. But recent research has turned these assumptions upside

down. What schools do matters enormously. And what matters most is good teaching. (p. #3)

Related studies (as cited in Cole, 1995) conducted by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) in the United States between 1989 and 1991 supported the belief that factors such as poverty and diversity, which place students at risk of academic failure, are secondary to the risk caused by ineffective instruction. Several barriers were identified that can prevent poor and minority students from receiving good instruction. Some of these barriers are caused by attitudes and beliefs held by educators, such as a lack of understanding of cultural differences, low expectations for poor and minority students, and inappropriate instruction. Although quality teaching cannot reduce the effects of poverty to zero, this research establishes clearly that it can make a significant difference in student achievement.

Instructional Leadership

In a learning community, creating and sharing knowledge is central to effective leadership (Fullan, 2002). Instructional leadership is often associated with the principal of a school whose role is to focus on the instruction, curriculum and assessment for the purpose of ensuring student achievement (Glanz, 2006). However, a school that is a learning community needs leaders at many levels. A principal cannot be expected to be an expert in all academic areas and needs to rely upon competent staff members to share their knowledge and expertise. Reeves (2006) describes these resource people as part of a network of individuals who have the potential to create and sustain change in schools. He proposes that changing the status quo will require administrators to identify and capitalize

on the expertise and enthusiasm of the teachers to whom others go to for advice. This approach contrasts with traditional change initiatives that rely upon the hierarchical model for the transmission of information and skills.

Teachers who question their practices and search for solutions to problems through classroom action research can construct knowledge (Sagor, 1997). This knowledge can be shared with others who may be persuaded to engage in teacher inquiry as a form of professional development and knowledge building. Through collegial conversations teachers and principals can collaborate in a learning community that together works to improve student learning. Jacobsen and Hunter (2003) discussed the use of online discussions as an avenue for teacher collaboration. In a recent study, Marzano, McNutty, and Waters (2004), found

Effective leaders not only know what to do, but how, when and why to do it....Teacher leaders struggle for control, not power over their work lives. Their goal is to catalyze others to work as hard and care as deeply about what happens in classrooms as they do. (p.49, 69)

I viewed this study as an opportunity for me to become an instructional teacher leader and to act as a catalyst for change within the school. With a greater understanding of the theory behind language instruction and a completed action research study, I hope to share the findings and convince others that classroom research has helped to improve both my practice and students' learning. Throughout the study, my confidence has been supported by the following quote:

"The leadership we need is available in all of us. We have only to make it manifest" (Owen as cited in Glanz, 2006, p.14).

Implications for Teachers

The message in this body of literature is clear. Classroom teachers need to be well informed in the theory and practice of second language learning, possess an understanding of the barriers to academic success facing children from poor, First Nations and immigrant families, and have a repertoire of instructional strategies and methods to meet the needs of all students. Teachers of ESD students can be catalysts for change in schools with respect to attitudes, programs and instruction for second language learners. Principals can facilitate staff development by encouraging action research and other forms of teacher inquiry, providing time for collaboration, and making funds available for resources. Teacher leaders can be agents for change by sharing their practice and helping to improve teaching and learning inside and outside the classroom.

Summary

This chapter presented the main strands of research that informed my study. It began with a review of ESL/D policies, programs and familiarization with the principles of learning that enhance achievement for students from all backgrounds, and particularly for culturally diverse groups. This review has provided me with the knowledge to proceed with my investigation. Literature on school improvement and instructional leadership was relevant to the purpose and design of the study and to emphasize the importance of sharing reflections and commitments.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH DESIGN

In this chapter I will begin with a description of the type of qualitative research methods emerging today as a form of professional development, a means to improve classroom learning, and a way to generate professional knowledge of interest to other educators. I will provide justification for the use of these methods for my educational investigation that draws upon the social constructivist view of learning among students and teachers and the influence of culture in a classroom and school setting. I describe the learning circle approach (Davy & Brown, 2006), which guided the process of my action research and the participants, research site, and data collection and analysis procedures. As changes were implemented and discoveries made, the decision making process was traced to document my research path.

Teacher Inquiry and Educational Reform

Research in the field of ESL/D is lacking in quantitative data largely due to the problem of defining language proficiency and measurement of learner performance (Larson-Freeman & Long, 1995). The method most often employed in second language acquisition research takes the form of case studies and action research designs, both qualitative in nature. Case studies provide information on the language learning process and the learners themselves but they do not measure learner performance. Action research is a classroom-based research tool that allows teachers, through inquiry and reflection, to direct their own professional development and improve their practice. Using formative assessment methods, teachers collect data to understand learner competence and make instructional decisions based on the results.

Classroom action research can be characterized as a form of naturalistic inquiry (Creswell, 2005) because it is carried out in the natural setting of the classroom, uses a case study format for reporting, and relies on qualitative methods. Forms of naturalistic inquiry provide alternatives to the scientific or rationalistic paradigm. According to Guba and Lincoln (1981) few practices in schools have originated in research data, but rather on the basis of experience. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) describe teacher inquiry as involving some kind of systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. They claim that teacher researchers have invented new tools and forms, some unlike the traditional modes used in scientific studies, to obtain and construct meaning from the data. The trustworthiness of this method of inquiry can be addressed through the translation of concepts that are typically used in a rationalistic paradigm (*internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity*) to naturalistic terms (*credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability*) (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

Case Study

Qualitative case studies have been prevalent in educational research for over thirty years. The case study is conducted to identify and explain issues and problems of practice. Merriam (1998) defines a case as an integrated system around which there are boundaries. "The case then, could be a person such as a student, a teacher, a principal; a program; a group such as a class, a school, a community; a specific policy; and so on" (p.# 27). As in all forms of qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Guba and Lincoln (1981) further describe the researcher as one who is responsive to the context and can adapt techniques to the circumstances. He

or she can also process data as it is gathered, allowing for clarification and summarizing as the study evolves. Case studies are not associated with any particular methods of data collection or data analysis. However, action research, with its cycles of implementation, reflection, and revision, provides a structured approach for adapting techniques to a specific context. A case study provides a rich, thick description of a phenomenon to gain insight and add to a knowledge base, ultimately improving practice.

Challenges of Case Studies

Like any research designs, case studies have limitations. Some of the special features that characterize case study research such as the ability to be descriptive and analytical can also be problematic. According to Merriam (1998), an unbiased and ethical approach in the collection and interpretation of data is dependent upon the investigator, as are the communication skills necessary when completing the written narrative. An additional concern pointed out by Merriam (1998) is associated with the sharing of case study research. Findings that reveal discrepancies between “what is” and “what ought to be” can create difficulties for the researcher on both personal and political levels. As I proceeded with my inquiry I was aware of the risk associated with revealing my discoveries and upsetting the status quo of the school.

Action Research

Action research was originally developed during the 1930s and 1940s by Kurt Lewin, (Creswell, 2005), a German social psychologist, as a process to speak to social conditions through group discussions that included four steps: planning, acting, observing

and reflecting (Creswell, 2005). It was later used in teachers' colleges as a technique to encourage teachers to examine and modify their practices. The period beginning in the late 1950s to the mid 1970s saw a decline in this type of teacher inquiry as quantitative methods regained popularity and action research at that time was regarded by many as "soft science". However, in the 1970s action research resurfaced as a workable method to address practical issues in the classroom. Wideman (as cited in Raptis & Fleming, 2005) found action research to be effective in Ontario's elementary schools:

Educational literature, presentations, and workshops inform but cannot replace teachers' personal investigations of how to improve learning in their own classrooms. When teachers themselves identify a meaningful problem with their practice, they take responsibility for resolving it and therefore become directors of their own professional growth. (p. 3)

Today, action research is recognized as a process that allows teachers to have greater control over their professional growth through research, reflection and improvements to instructional practice. Sagor (2000) defines it as "a disciplined process of inquiry conducted by and for those taking the action" (p. 3). Action research can take the form of individual teachers conducting classroom studies, groups of teachers working together on a project, or school-wide inquiry. In all of these processes, teachers become both critical consumers and constructors of knowledge. Dufour and Eaker (2004) connect the study of one's own practice to professional learning communities in which teachers use formative assessment to monitor what the students are learning and to direct instruction toward mastery of the intended curriculum. Mitchell and Sackney (2001) also

link successful learning communities to systems in which leadership and power is shared and teachers are encouraged to study their own practice.

I had previously conducted an action research project and reviewed the traditional approaches (e.g., Bray, Lee, Smith & Yorks, 2000, Sagor, 2000 & Wells, 1994) which were developed for collaborative action research but can be adapted for studies by a single researcher (Davy, 2005). I chose to use the learning circle model as outlined by Davy and Brown (2006). This cyclical model has its roots in learning community theory (Brown, 2004; Mitchell & Sackney, 2001) with a social constructivist foundation (DeVillar, Faltis, & Cummins, 1994; Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000). It is based on the belief that meaningful learning for teachers and ultimately for their students occurs through communication. Teachers, through reflection, collaboration and interaction with colleagues, make sense of learning and teaching and together move forward in pursuit of common goals. The inquiry process is designed to integrate empirical research and teacher understandings in reflective practice. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) explain:

...the goal is understanding, articulating, and ultimately altering practice and social relationships in order to bring about fundamental change in classrooms, schools, districts, programs, and professional organizations. At the base of this commitment is a deep and passionately enacted responsibility to students' learning. (p.9)

Action research can give teachers greater control over their professional growth through research, reflection, and improvements for instructional practice (Raptis & Fleming, 2005). Action research has the potential to transform practice. When teachers study their own practice, it models for others that learning from teaching is part of the job

of teaching. Reconnecting theory and practice through teacher research can empower individual teachers as well as give more weight to teachers' voices. The generation of knowledge results in personal growth for the teacher researcher and can also lead to staff development and to improving the status of teaching as a profession (Rearick & Feldman, 1998). The cyclical process of action research can be expected to promote continual learning and renewed commitment. Teachers when new problems arise who have carried out action research projects in their schools or classrooms may possess the tools to continue to collect and analyze data to inform and improve their teaching practice.

Combining Ethnographic Case Study Reporting and Action Research

The use of an ethnographic case study method for an action research project suitably addressed the research problems. The approach has been employed by teachers who want to improve their practice and seek to do so through reflection, collaboration and interaction with colleagues. The study was designed to investigate avenues to meet the literacy needs of a group of students that had diverse cultural backgrounds. This required me to use specific ethnographic techniques such as the suspension of judgement and the examination of personal biases as I learned more about the students' cultures. According to Eisner, Geertz and Wolcott (as cited in Brock & Raphael, 2005) good ethnographers have much in common with good teachers as they both know that in order to engage in deep, meaningful, and sustained interactions with others, they must understand them – their beliefs, values, and ways of communicating. Brock and Raphael (2005) articulate the point:

Good teachers have always known that quality teaching rests on knowing “where the learner is” and building lessons to capitalize on this information. We suggest that knowing where the learner is should include knowing about the learner’s language and culture as well as the learner’s prior knowledge with respect to content. (p. 29)

The inductive nature of the case study method allows the investigator to adapt techniques, a characteristic of the meaning stage of the learning circle model of modifying and changing classroom practice.

Challenges of Action Research

Critics of action research in educational settings find fault with the design, claiming that teachers are not researchers. Although they do have high levels of education and commitment, teachers often do not have backgrounds in research design or measurement skills. Action research, with its practical application, does not have the rigorous characteristics of other research designs and difficulties arise with the selection of measurement instruments, lack of pre- and post- intervention measures and stable control groups. Determining which interventions are actually making a difference in learning and what changes can be considered normal growth for a student is a complex task (Raptis & Fleming, 2005). However, when viewed as an authentic form of naturalistic inquiry, action research is justified as appropriate for schools. While traditional researchers can develop and describe de-contextualized knowledge, teachers are uniquely situated to determine methods of implementation and shape strategies to their classroom contexts.

The quality of classroom action research depends on the reflective ability of teachers as well as on collaboration and support from colleagues. Therefore, the success of a project is partially dependent upon the culture of a school. Hursh (as cited in Slutsky, 2005) concluded from his work with teachers that “action research, when undertaken as an individual activity, is easily overwhelmed by the culture of the school” (p.11).

External factors such as a district’s support can also affect the outcome of a research project. Teachers engaging in classroom inquiry and assuming leadership roles within the school sharply contrasts with traditional research conducted in university settings and the hierarchical design of many schools. This study aimed at integrating action research and instructional leadership within a learning community framework has been conducted with an understanding of the factors and challenges associated with school reform.

Despite these challenges, proactive teachers are engaging in action research as a response to the growing number of students entering classrooms with additional language learning needs. In several studies (Grisham, 2000; Raptis & Fleming, 2005; Slutsky, 2005) teachers themselves identified a problem in their practice and took steps to solve it by collecting data, making observations and reflecting on their practice. An exploration of the literature on action research in the field of ESL/D education revealed projects that focused on the implementation of strategies recommended for second language learners as well as inquiries into the use of assessment to inform practice and improve learning for all students, including ESL/D learners. Through these studies the teachers gained knowledge of language pedagogy, added to their instructional repertoires, and recorded positive changes in attitudes and student achievement. My cognizance of the benefits and

challenges of a case study method and the action research process assisted me as I designed and conducted my study.

Design of the Study

The study began with the Wholeness stage of the learning circle (Brown, 2004) in which I designed a structure to examine the analytical, critical and creative aspects of each question. During the analytical phase, I conducted an appreciative inquiry into the effectiveness of my literacy program and the learning community capacity of the school and district. In the critical phase, I identified areas needing growth in regard to my program and to the school climate. Finally, in the creative phase I introduced new strategies and approaches to my students and to interested colleagues during classroom instruction and workshops.

The questions were addressed using an appreciative inquiry approach (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1990). Appreciative inquiry was first introduced in the 1980s through research in organizational behavior. Cooperrider and Srivastva discovered that when inquiry about an organization focused on problems, the result was negative and the capacity for change was diminished. However, when the questions focused on successes, it strengthened the system and facilitated growth. The appreciative inquiry approach is currently used at various levels in the education system to build upon what has been successful in the past and to create action strategies and plans to achieve future goals.

I analyzed the effectiveness of my current literacy program in light of the research and assessed its adherence to a social and cultural view of teaching and learning. The language learning literature informed the evaluation of my own practices and helped

me to identify strengths and areas of need in my program. I documented existing strategies that could be expected to be effective in an *instructional inventory*, a document that I also used to identify additional practices to implement (Appendices B & C). The concept of the instructional inventory originated with Bennett and Rolheiser's (2001) description of an instructional repertoire or collection of organizers, strategies and practices required by a teacher to respond creatively to the diverse needs of students. During a course on instructional leadership the idea was extended into a graphic representation of instructional strategies and methods. My inventory included five categories of instructional strategies: direct instruction, indirect instruction, experiential learning, independent study and interactive instruction (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 1988). Within each category were several methods associated with the strategy, as well as methods that are used with a variety of strategies. For example, in a unit of study a teacher may use a lecture method as a direct instruction strategy and a small group discussion method as an interactive instruction strategy. Skills refer to specific instructional behaviors such as questioning, discussing, demonstrating and planning. Tactics describe those activities employed to teach a skill. For example, a tactic used to teach discussion is Think/Pair/Share. In my study, the instructional inventory served three functions. The inventory provided: (a) a documentation of existing practice, (b) an inventory of promising practices drawn from the literature, and (c) a tool for tracking the incremental implementation of new practices (Appendices B & C).

In the second stage, Awareness, I started to adjust my practice and experiment with new techniques and approaches, gathering data through a reflective journal (Appendix D), action step matrices, field notes, assessments and peer observations. The

action step matrix (Kerrigan, 2005; Brown & McGregor, 2006) was used as a data collection tool, recording steps and thoughts as they happened and provided an overview of strategies, perceived effects, and decision making related to continuation or adaptation of each strategy. The additional synthesis into the matrix was important for the data analysis as it documented how decisions were made and it distinguished between planned actions and decisions based on student response or unexpected results (Appendices E, F & G).

Beyond the ongoing cycles of reflecting and revising that are documented in the action step matrix, data analysis consisted of relating all forms of data to the research questions. I looked for key elements that impacted on the students' performance and attitude towards learning. This activity constitutes the Meaning stage of the learning circle in which I analyzed the data and evaluated how well my practice matched my vision in light of student responses.

Subsequently, in the Commitment stage, I identified principles and strategies that I am certain will be sustained as ongoing aspects of my teaching practice, including those of community building, culturally responsive teaching, and experiential learning. The final stage also involves completion of the thesis writing and the sharing of the research with colleagues in my school and beyond. The interest of colleagues in the process and reflections of this study will be one indication of the school and district's increased capacity as a learning community.

Consent and Ethical Considerations

Prior to beginning the project, I obtained university ethics board approval for the study (Appendix H) as well as permission to conduct the research from the school board superintendent and the principal (Appendices I & J). Ethics procedures require the informed consent of participants and so I obtained written permission from the parents of students in my class (Appendix K). Student identities have been protected through the use of culturally appropriate pseudonyms.

Research Site

The study took place in an elementary school in a small city in central BC. The total population was 242 students with 52 First Nations students, 65 Indo Canadian students, and the remaining 125 students comprise a mix of many cultural backgrounds. The Indo Canadian parents consisted of first and second generation Canadians and new arrivals. Some of the parents of the Indo Canadian students had attended the school themselves. The First Nations population was described as being generally more transient, with students who transferred to and from reserves and schools within the community. Most of the students from all cultural groups were from middle to low income families with some families receiving government assistance. About 4% of the children lived in foster homes.

In 2006, I conducted a course-related case study on the causes and effects of changing demographics at the school where I have taught for over two decades. In my conversations and interviews with other teachers and the administrator, two themes emerged. The first was *social capital* (Coleman, 1988) which refers to the basic needs of a child, such as food, clothing and shelter, as well as the opportunities and positive

learning experiences children receive from home. Over a period of twenty years the social capital of some children attending the school has changed considerably. The second theme I identified was that of school culture. Within the diverse culture of the school there existed differing values and expectations of education. This study provided me with a deeper understanding of the complexity of teaching students from diverse backgrounds and the need for in-school programs to address the basic and academic needs of these students.

In this school district, ESL students, traditionally, have received support from an ESL specialist in pull-out programs at both elementary and high school levels. It was not until 2003 that the district began to access the government funding for ESD learners and provide service in language to students of aboriginal ancestry. At the beginning of each school year the ESL/D students are identified and the classroom teachers recommend students that they believe would benefit from the small group instruction in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The possible candidates are administered tests to determine their eligibility and the students are then scheduled into the ESL/D teacher's timetable, which could translate to several times a week or once every two weeks, depending upon the student caseload. In the fall of 2007, the district adopted a resource team model in which teachers specializing in learning assistance, second language learning, or special education provide learning support to students with a wide range of additional needs.

In my view, teachers in the school rarely discussed their professional practice and the staff, although it could not be characterized as being collegial, was congenial for the most part. In January of 2007, a new principal was appointed to the school and he began

working to change the status quo by encouraging collaboration and providing opportunities for teachers to work together. He set aside time to visit classrooms, observe lessons, and provide feedback to teachers. The principal, as well as a few colleagues, had shown an interest in and provided support for my action research project. I looked to these people to provide me with some input on what was working for them as they strove to meet the needs of the ESD students in their classrooms. In September, 2007, there were several changes in teaching and administrative personnel due to transfers and retirements, which provided me with an expectation of increased collaboration for the second phase of my research. Thus, while the study was not designed as a collaborative action research project, dialogue with colleagues contributed to it.

Setting

The research involved two different classes of students. The first phase of the study began in May and June of 2007 in my combined grade two and three classroom of twenty-one children: nine boys and twelve girls. Fourteen of the twenty-one students had attended the school since Kindergarten. The students in the class were of Indo Canadian, First Nations, Mexican, and Western European ancestry. In the first six months of the 2006-2007 school year, I worked to build relationships with the students in my class, establish classroom routines, set expectations for work and behavior, and create a community of learners. That is, I encouraged the children to respect each other, to work as a team and to problem solve and plan together, much the same way a healthy and effective school would operate. My teaching style incorporates both large and small group instruction. The students were accustomed to working with a variety of partners

and in cooperative groups. I planned the third term of the year as an appropriate time for the study as I had developed rapport with the students and by that time they were familiar with each others' personalities and learning needs. The second stage of the research began in the fall of the school year 2007-2008 as I continued my reflective practice with a new class of grade 3 students and implemented instructional strategies that were shown to be successful during the first phase of the study.

Participants

To establish the context of the study, I describe the student participants, as well as myself, the teacher-researcher

Teacher-researcher

In this study, I had dual roles as a researcher and a participant. An educator for twenty-six years, I have spent twenty-three of those years at this same school teaching grades two through seven, working closely with the ESL/D specialists to support new immigrants and ESD students. The cultural diversity of the school has contributed to both challenging and rewarding experiences. The changing demographics prompted me to complete a diploma in counseling in 1992 and more recently a study researching the literacy needs of a diverse group of students. As a student in the UNBC Master of Education Program in Multidisciplinary Leadership I had the opportunity to investigate the theory and promising practices associated with second language learning through this thesis. As a teacher-researcher of students with cultural and linguistic backgrounds different from my own, I am learning to use the tools of an ethnographer in my classroom as I strive to suspend judgement and consider other viewpoints.

Throughout my working history I have taken a leading role in professional development by implementing initiatives in my classroom and co-facilitating district workshops on learning styles and cooperative learning. My personal potential as an instructional leader has been enhanced during graduate coursework as I participated in group presentations with other members of the cohort and developed additional technology skills. At this time I see myself as an instructional teacher leader who has, through this thesis, generated knowledge that can be shared with others and used to improve teaching practice and student learning.

Reflection has been an important part of my professional growth and orientation to change. Typically, during my career I have reviewed my classroom experiences during planning times after school and on the weekends. I have planned collaboratively and had collegial conversations with other teachers both in and outside of my own school. To satisfy my need for change and continual learning I have taught a variety of grades and I am familiar with the creative tension that signals a need for additional knowledge and skill.

My commitment to lifelong learning and dedication to teaching is evident in my pursuit of professional development through the completion of post-graduate degrees, participation in workshops, and as a sponsor teacher and mentor for pre-service and early career teachers. All of these roles make professional growth possible by providing me with access to new research, resources, promising practices, and most importantly collegial conversations.

Students

In the 2006-2007 school year I had twenty-one students in my classroom. Based on enrolment and assessment in the fall, nine students were designated as needing ESD instruction. Since that time, two new students of Aboriginal ancestry registered in the class, both with limited reading and writing abilities. Along with five other students, they received support from both the ESD and Learning Assistance teachers in pull-out programs. Five of the twenty-one students in the class were on the caseload of the Speech and Language Pathologist.

Procedure

In this section I will document the Awareness stage of the study, outlining the tools used to record the implementation of new instructional strategies, my interactions with students and colleagues, assessment methods and decision-making. This section is a record of my intentional journey to become a more effective literacy teacher by employing a constructivist approach to teaching and learning in language arts as well as culturally responsive instruction. I will distinguish between planned data analysis strategies and those actually carried out in the study, along with justification for the changes. Critical incidents (Newman, 1987) or events that made either positive or negative contributions to my research by confirming beliefs or by uncovering assumptions (Cranton, 2006) emerged as important opportunities for growth.

Data Collection Instruments

Ongoing assessment of student learning was used to direct instruction and emphasize students' progress and achievement. The *assessment for learning* methods (Earl, 2006) were observations, questioning, conversations, learning logs, reading responses, and student writing samples, which provided me with information on student thinking and learning. I also planned to ask the students in the class as well as colleagues what worked best for them in their learning and teaching of language arts. Through the processes of action research and assessment for learning I used the information gathered to plan for instruction, monitor student progress, and provide feedback and encouragement to enhance learning. Data collection began with an appreciative inquiry into my teaching practice that examined the following aspects of my teaching: how I grouped students, the instructional strategies and resources I used, and my assessment and feedback methods.

The literature on creating a culturally responsive classroom (Shade, Kelly & Oberg, 1997) encouraged me to find out about the students' home cultures, priorities, and interests to help direct instruction. Initially I had planned to use *the BADER Reading and Language Inventory of Unfinished Sentences* (Bader, 2005) as a tool to acquaint myself with the students in the class (Appendix L). However, commencing the study in the latter part of the school year allowed me the time to learn about and establish close relationships with my students through conversations, class meetings, learning logs, journal entries, observation and more. I did use an inventory similar to the Bader instrument for the second phase of my research, which began in September 2007. It was my hope that as I developed closer relationships with the learners in my classroom, I

would see an improvement in their academic achievement and possibly in their engagement and motivation. Dillon (as cited in USDA, 2006) states: “Ultimately, no significant learning occurs without a significant relationship”.

Assessment. I assessed and recorded students’ reading and writing skills using the Ministry of Education Reference sets. Input from colleagues was acquired through informal conversations and meetings with the ESL/D teacher to discuss student results on the Peabody, a norm-referenced test used as a measure of receptive language abilities. The test had been administered to same group of students in September of 2006 and then again in June of 2007. Observations and interactions with the students provided me with valuable information as to their interests and abilities in speaking, reading and writing. Teacher conversations and interactions with students were noted in my research journal.

Reflective journal. A reflective journal (RJ) was used to record my thoughts, feelings and observations as I addressed the research questions. Initially I had planned to write responses to the prompt: Describe what went well, what could be better and what was a surprise as a new technique was used or an instructional approach was adjusted to accommodate the different level of students in the classroom (Sagor,1992). Instead I opted for a more open-ended approach to the journal writing as the entries did not always involve the implementation of a new approach or strategy, but documented incidents or discoveries that related to my study. The critical incidents (Newman, 1987) which described both positive and negative experiences that occurred during my work with students and colleagues were recorded in the journal and later analyzed during the Meaning phase of the learning circle.

Action Step Matrix. In addition to the journal, a key data collection tool was the Action Step Matrix (ASM) that was used to map strategies, effects, and decisions to maintain, adapt, or reject the strategies. Each time I tried a new strategy, adapted or modified an instructional approach and collaborated with colleagues I recorded the experiences on action step matrices. The ASM recorded what I tried, what I saw, and what I decided. The design of the matrix lent itself well to the prompts I had planned to use for the journal. As I reflected on lessons and interactions with students and teachers I used the prompts to assist in the decision making that occurred between the initial action step and the subsequent action.

Codes	Data Collection and Analysis Strategies
RJ	Researcher's Journal
ASM	Action Step Matrix
CI	Critical Incidents
PPVT	Peabody

Figure 2: Code System for Data Collection and Analysis

In the course of the research I developed two new data analysis tools and adapted and modified another. A continuum was used to illustrate the students' knowledge and respect for culture, which I assessed through participation in culturally based activities and discussions. I created this tool during the data analysis stage of the study; however, in future years I plan to use it early in the year to assess students' attitudes and document their growth over time. In addition, I analyzed the student feedback on favorite activities

by categorizing the activities such as math drills, cooperative learning tasks and experiments according to their method of instruction (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 1988). This categorization assisted me in identifying which methods of instruction and strategies the students were most receptive to, as well as the promising practices I would need to add to my instructional repertoire. I modified the action step matrix to allow for the recording of one preplanned action and a subsequent action. During data collection the observations and implications boxes in the matrix helped to guide my decision making. Later during reflection I would synthesize the information into cause and effect narratives adapting the action step matrix for use as an analysis tool.

Summary

In this chapter I have outlined classroom action research and provided justification for my method of inquiry. A description of the study's participants, setting and procedures have been given, including the data collection instruments used to document the inquiry process. Through the use of the learning circle model I have engaged in research to study and improve my practice. It began with the Wholeness stage in which I created a vision about the kind of literacy teacher I wanted to be and the type of school I wanted to work in.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter I will report the Awareness and Meaning stages of the learning circle approach (Brown, 2004) as I analyze the data in relation to the research questions that initiated the study. The research questions will serve as an outline for reporting of the investigation and each question will be examined in terms of analytical, critical and creative aspects. I will share the discoveries I made during the appreciative inquiry and the areas identified as needing growth in regard to my literacy practices and teacher leadership potential. All data were interpreted in light of my teaching experience and my understanding of the literature reviewed and how it might inform instructional decisions. Within the process of planning, implementing, reflecting and revising in the Awareness and Meaning stages, I synthesized information contained in journal entries and action step matrices.

In the role of researcher I was breaking new ground within our school and needed to proceed cautiously as I shared with those colleagues who were interested in learning about second language instruction and improving upon their practice. As an out-of-town workshop presenter, I discovered I was comfortable sharing with colleagues from other districts and hoped that my colleagues would be equally receptive to learning. As the study progressed and I became more convinced of the effectiveness of particular strategies and approaches, I revealed my practice to interested colleagues. The inclusion of content and strategies recommended for teaching students of different cultures and different learning styles was evident in lessons, center work and displays of student work during the school year, and provided a model for others to follow. I used a self-critical lens in my observations, assessments and reflections of student learning, and my own

teaching. Through the process of teacher inquiry I sought to improve the teaching and learning in my classroom and upon completion of this study I incorporated promising practices into my instructional repertoire and shared my findings with other teachers.

As I examined the data from the study I was able to identify critical incidents (Newman, 1987) that occurred in my classroom, school and district that impacted my teaching practice and improved my understanding of the school's and district's learning community capacity. Although I experienced several such events during the course of the study, it is my intention to share the most powerful. My understandings, as summarized, will include a detailed account of observations and insights made during the inquiry through the description of critical incidents, quotes from field notes, classroom artifacts, and includes photos and student work samples collected throughout the course of the study (Appendix O). Multiple sources were used to triangulate the data and add trustworthiness to my interpretations. Also, I will discuss two themes, culture and communication, that radiated throughout all stages of the study and impacted teaching and learning within the classroom and the school.

Awareness

The Awareness stage began with an appreciative inquiry into my literacy program and spoke to the first research question: How do I currently address the literacy learning needs of the students in my classroom? I examined the instructional models, strategies, methods, and skills (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 1988) that were currently in use in my classroom, as well as practices within school and district to determine if they reflected a social and culturally responsive view of teaching and learning. Results of the appreciative inquiry are shown (Appendix A).

I also examined my contributions to the capacity for a learning community in the school and district. The appreciative inquiry and the subsequent goals constitute the analytical and critical aspects of the study in which I analyzed how the class, school and district were functioning and identified areas where I hoped to effect change as a classroom teacher and instructional leader.

Goals

The knowledge gained from the appreciative inquiry combined with the literature on social constructivism, culturally responsive teaching and assessment allowed me to create a vision for the kind of classroom and school I wanted. An improved understanding of second language acquisition assisted in my instructional decision-making and connecting theory with practice. An analysis of my instructional inventory helped to identify areas needing growth in the classroom and to implement new strategies as well as adapt and master others. I was surprised to learn that many of the promising practices recommended for students with diverse learning needs were already part of my instructional repertoire such as cooperative learning, readers' theatre, and barrier games. I became aware of areas that were underdeveloped in the inventory; for example, oral language tactics and culturally responsive instructional methods. The appreciative inquiry also offered an opportunity to acknowledge the efforts made by others and me to encourage teacher collaboration and to address cultural diversity at the school and district level through participation in collegial conversations and multicultural events.

Through critical examination I was able to identify opportunities for growth as a teacher and as a member of a learning community. I had come to appreciate the

importance of relationships in community building and learning. In the classroom second language learners need an environment in which home cultures are honored and strategies used that encourage interaction and student talk for both language development and content learning. In a school setting teachers need to have time to talk and to establish relationships built on trust, respect and the common goal of improved student learning. The subsequent goals were built upon existing strengths in my teaching practice and a desire to improve teaching and learning inside and outside of my classroom. I outlined two sets of goals: a) meeting the literacy needs of my students using the framework of social learning theory and a culturally responsive approach to teaching and, b) facilitating my teacher leadership by modeling effective strategies for other teachers and helping them to connect the theory and practice of second language instruction. The first goal was to learn more about my students' lives outside of school in order to design a program that reflected an understanding of their cultural backgrounds, needs and interests. Second, I planned to provide daily oral language activities and collaborative group work as a means to support the language and literacy development of second language learners. Third, I wanted to modify my instructional inventory to include a list of tactics or activities used to strengthen oral language and engage students in meaningful learning. Finally, I wanted to position myself as a teacher leader by sharing knowledge gained during the inquiry informally during conversations with colleagues and formally through workshops and written articles.

I believe the personal goals to improve my practice align with the district's literacy initiatives and the Ministry of Education's increased attention to classroom assessment to inform instruction. Further, a greater emphasis on oral language instruction

for language development and learning, my second goal aligns with recent provincial emphasis on oral language, as evident in the latest edition of the Language Arts curriculum, the Integrated Resource Package (IRP).

Next, I outline the creative phase of the inquiry in which I took action to address the second research question: What instructional approaches can I use to further accommodate the different levels of English proficiency of my students without compromising the instruction for students at grade level?

The following section reports on the action research processes of trying new strategies, reflecting on the experiences and extending, adapting or rejecting the strategies to address the goals of the study. I used action step matrices to document the use of strategies, the results and my decision making as I adjusted the curriculum, tried new instructional strategies and made changes to the classroom environment. The researcher's journal was used as a tool for reflection after the implementation of promising practices and to record my thoughts and feelings after experiences with students and colleagues. I also describe critical incidents that added meaning to the study.

During the inquiry I found myself moving back and forth along the learning circle stages of Wholeness, Awareness, and Meaning in pursuit of my goals to increase the literacy achievement and strengthen the learning community capacity of the staff. I began to make sense of my work through the analysis of critical incidents, student and teacher responses to new learning and connections to the literature.

Creating a Culturally Compatible Classroom

My initial step in the creative phase was to produce a culturally responsive environment. I began by examining my own perceptions concerning cultural groups and taking on the role of an ethnographer in my classroom. I had to avoid labels like “passive” or “quiet” for ESD students and suspend judgement on cultural groups while I listened to and learned from my students. Allen (1999) emphasized the importance of self-reflection in dealing with issues of diversity: “to recognize ourselves as part of the problem reveals our power to make a difference, our power to influence the lives of the children we teach” (p. #144). As I reviewed the literature and conducted the study, I reflected on how my beliefs and practices acknowledged students’ cultures and assisted with their literacy learning.

This reflective exercise triggered the memory of a troubling incident several years earlier at the school. A grade two teacher, who was fluent in both French and English, had been complaining to staff about her Indo Canadian students speaking Punjabi in class and on the playground. I recall her telling us that she handled the situation by telling the students that they came to school to learn English and she did not want to hear any more Punjabi. Ironically, the teacher herself had four children who had attended English classes and were taught the French language at home. Based on her own experience I suspect she was promoting a practice that she thought would help her students to be successful. However, research has since shown that acknowledging and valuing students’ home language helps in building their self-esteem, a factor that can affect academic success. Gay (2000) refers to the type of scenario I described in the following terms:

In our experience, most educators choose their profession because they are hard-working, dedicated and caring people. However, even well-meaning people can have attitudes, dispositions and knowledge that are not conducive to fostering student learning. (Brock & Raphael, 2005, p. #16, 17)

The following incident illustrates how possessing knowledge of second language acquisition assisted me with a classroom issue and helped to build a learning community. One Friday as we began our weekly class meeting, some students came to me complaining that their Indo Canadian classmates were speaking Punjabi during computer class (RJ,18/05/07). This incident created an opportunity for me to talk about the assets of being bilingual and to acknowledge students' first languages. I asked the second language learners if they could teach us how to say greetings in Punjabi, Spanish, and Chilcotin. While practicing the greetings the monolingual students began to appreciate the challenge in learning another language and showed a new respect for their bilingual classmates. In this instance, reflection of practices and research on second language acquisition had contributed to my instructional decision to honor my students' home cultures, a requirement of a culturally responsive classroom.

Listening and learning from students and parents. Planning for and providing a program that honors individual differences using a student-centered approach required me to get to know my students' needs, interests and learning styles. Through active and empathetic listening I learned more about my students' home culture, background knowledge, and level of understanding. Parents can also provide information about the family's home language and the ease with which their child learned to speak, to assist

with program planning. Student feedback during the study provided me with new insights into my teaching practices and impacted my instructional decision making.

The next section describes my continued efforts to address the diverse literacy needs of the students in my classroom. I offered an enhanced multicultural curriculum through the use of multicultural content and alternate forms of participation and adjusted my teaching practice to reflect a social constructivist view of teaching and learning. I scaffolded instruction; provided frequent opportunities for oral language, student-centered, and experiential learning; and used alternate forms of participation and assessment.

Culturally appropriate curriculum and materials. The literature on second language instruction (Alberta Education, 2005; Au, 2001; Law & Eakes, 2000) recommends the use of culturally appropriate curriculum and materials. In previous years I had planned activities such as a two-week unit study of culture that coincided with National Heritage Week, multicultural novel studies, and sharing of cultural artifacts. Although these were educationally sound activities, I realized that additional steps could be taken to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural backgrounds of my students and create a culturally rich program that was built upon students' background knowledge and experiences.

I made multicultural literature and videos available to students in the classroom as part of lessons. I invited a First Nations storyteller and band chief to the class (ASM, 01/05/07) to share the oral tradition of the aboriginal community, and our class attended Aboriginal Day at another school. Students were given opportunities to research other cultures and talk with their classmates about their traditions. I planned for the class to

organize a Canada celebration at the end of the year that included food and activities from the cultures present in the class.

Scaffolding instruction. Teaching a diverse group of learners presents the challenge of maintaining high expectations for all the students while providing support as they accomplish new tasks. Scaffolding, a term associated with the work of Vygotsky, is based on the belief that “good” learning is assisted learning that is ahead of independent development (Gibbons, 2002). Two students in my class were achieving significantly below grade level, unable to carry out reading and writing tasks independently. When Kole and Tasheena each transferred to the classroom from other schools they were naturally nervous. Their feelings of anxiety soon changed to frustration as the majority of the work in the classroom was beyond what they were capable of even with help from the teacher or an aide. In conversations with the students and their parents, I believe the students were accustomed to completing simpler tasks. As with all students new to my classroom, I had to assess their prior knowledge and then modify and adapt the curriculum to fit their needs. I drew from the literature on peer scaffolding (Bruner, 1978 as cited in Gibbons, 2002) to address this problem. Through group and partner work I was able to provide opportunities for the students to interact with their peers on literacy related activities.

Two critical incidents demonstrated the benefits of scaffolding, in which students work together to reach new levels of understanding. The first incident involved two First Nations students, the new student Tasheena and another girl, Tianna, who preferred to be a passive rather than an active participant in large group and cooperative learning situations. Tasheena and Tianna had chosen each other as partners. In their work together

I noted how Tianna, the more capable student, was able to bring Tasheena into the zone of proximal development and successfully complete some of the assignment, a task Tasheena would not have been able to do without support. This was one of the first instances in which I had seen Tianna highly engaged in work with a peer (RJ, 04/05/07).

The second incident that demonstrated the value of peer scaffolding occurred during readers theatre presentations (RJ, 16/05/07). Small groups of students were given fables to read and determine the lessons or morals. Following this the students were to divide the fable into speaking roles, practice their parts and perform for the class. As we formed the groups I mentioned the importance of a strong reader to act as narrator and to give support to other students. The groups were given time to organize and practice their parts. I circulated among the groups and observed that all the students were engaged in the activity. During the group presentations I noted that the more capable readers positioned themselves near the group members who needed support, assisting them by whispering the words from the script so they could then repeat them aloud to the audience. I was impressed and proud of the respectful manner in which the students had scaffolded the activity. It allowed every member of the group to participate and feel good about their part in the presentation. When I gave feedback to the groups I complimented them on their teamwork. This was a critical teaching moment as it drew attention to the importance of creating a positive classroom environment that would increase its learning community capacity. As the students worked together to learn new skills and concepts and improve their level of understanding, they simultaneously learned how to be responsible and considerate members of their community.

Classroom talk. "Reading and writing float on a sea of talk" (Britton, 1993). My exploration of the literature on second language learners (Gibbons, 2002) had made me acutely aware that spoken language is a bridge to literacy. With speaking as a precursor to reading and writing, the students in my class needed contexts to talk productively in groups, pairs and with me. Although the class was accustomed to working in cooperative groups and with partners, I planned to choose activities more specifically to assist in language development. One type of activity I introduced was called a Barrier Game (Gibbons, 2002). Barrier games are usually played in pairs and involve an information gap. Partners sat back to back with similar pictures and had to ask each other questions to discover a number of differences. Although the noise level in the classroom was higher than usual, I observed all students engaged in and enjoying the activity (ASM, 13/06/07).

Upon reflection I felt that the barrier games offered an opportunity for students to develop their listening and questioning skills and I extended the idea to include activities that require one partner to describe to the other a simple drawing to reproduce. In subsequent lessons I planned for other oral language tactics in my instructional repertoire that encouraged students to discuss ideas with partners before beginning a reading or writing assignment. As I incorporated these tactics into literacy lessons I did so with an awareness of the theory behind the practice, known as "conscious competence" (Howell, 1982). Treemant, Bernhardt, Rodriguez-Munoz, and Aiello (2000) claim that:

Good teachers have a repertoire of strategies that will serve them well in working with ESL students. Nevertheless, these strategies can become more powerful tools in the hands of a teacher when connected to an understanding of second language acquisition. (p. #35)

Experts in the field of second language learning (Brown, 2001; Gibbons, 2002) have shown support for the use of dialogue to improve understanding. Communication, both verbal and nonverbal, is a vital learning component that can contribute to the academic success of a diverse group of students.

Teaching listening and speaking lessons on to the students enabled me to hone my own communication skills. For example, when students approached me before school to chat casually I made sure to model good listening habits and provide support for the students by allowing them time to think about what they wanted to say and rephrasing and asking them questions for the purpose of clarification. After seven months of student-student and student-teacher interactions the second language learners who had been reluctant to participate in whole-class discussions began to volunteer. I also found students were able to approach reading and writing tasks with greater confidence when they were given the opportunity to talk with a partner or in a small group beforehand about what they had read or about their ideas for a story (ASM, 18/06/07). This eventual participation of “passive” students challenged some previous teacher assumptions about them. Thus, my understanding of the research on constructivist learning was confirmed in my own classroom.

Experiential learning. Planning in my program for more experiential learning opportunities including field trips, experiments, storytelling, games, and model building aligned with a principle of the CLT approach which involves the teacher linking the learning of new concepts to students’ existing knowledge and experience. Differences in the social capital and cultural backgrounds of my students created a diverse classroom base. Ideas familiar to one group of students were foreign to another group. Through

classroom activities I was able to provide first-hand knowledge and the use of authentic information and experience appeared to bring more enthusiasm for learning and greater meaning from the lessons.

To illustrate, I describe a reading lesson (ASM, 06/06/07) using *The Very Last First Time* (Andrews, 1985), a story set in Canada's far North. In preparation for the story I recapped vocabulary from previous lessons on the Inuit and uncovered the students' background knowledge about the sea. I had a box of seaweed, shells, crab legs, starfish, lobsters and crabs, including plastic models and real artifacts. The students were excited to touch and identify the items. Before I read the book to the class I was satisfied that all the students had some schema to assist them in their understanding and enjoyment of the story. Following the story each student created a Character Container, an activity with the purpose of helping students gain a deeper understanding of characters by having them create a container for the character using plasticene (Brownlie, 2005). As I offered more experiential learning opportunities I noted that the active physical participation of the students heightened the level of cognitive engagement and assisted in language development and understanding of concepts. Lessons that included visuals, concrete materials or hands-on activities such as model making, experimentation, or field trips created both meaning and enjoyment for the students. This was illustrated during a tour of the supermarket. The class had been studying food groups and the students correctly answered the dietician's questions about nutrition and tried a variety of foods (ASM, 08/05/07). Later in the term when the ESD teacher had her students prepare a fruit salad she told me the students' faces lit up when they were able to name and tell her that they had tasted many of the fruits (ASM, 08/05/31). These learning opportunities provided the

students with memorable experiences to assist with their understanding of curricular content and contributed to their oral language development through the introduction of new vocabulary and classroom talk. I believe I heard “This is fun” more frequently as students described classroom lessons, a comment usually reserved for gym and classroom parties (ASM, 08/05/07). I was encouraged by the feedback I was getting from the students and some of the parents about the benefits of this method of instruction.

A key characteristic of CLT is its child-centered approach to learning. The teacher acts as a facilitator as students direct more of their own learning through cooperative and collaborative contexts. This contrasts with the traditional teacher’s role to deliver a set curriculum to the class using the method of whole-class instruction. Students were once referred to as vessels to be filled with the teacher doing most of the talking and the students listening. In my classroom I typically have had students work as partners, small groups, and at interest and learning centers. Prior to the study and to my learning of the value of student interaction in language development, center work had not been an integral part of my program. Although it was scheduled into the timetable it was one of those things that I often set aside for something I deemed as more important. In the past I had preferred a more teacher-directed approach to centers, requiring students to visit and complete at least one activity at each station. I have since adopted a more flexible approach to allow for student choice and exploration.

Gibbons (2002) outlines several important principles for group work that has part of its aim, the development of language. They include clear and explicit instructions, a clear outcome for the group work, involvement of all children, and adequate time to complete the task. Students need to know how to work in groups and the teachers need to

recognize that talk is necessary for the task and to ensure that the task is cognitively appropriate and integrated with a curriculum topic. Once students become familiar with the center and group work expectations experiential learning provides an opportunity for second language learners to engage in productive talk. Group work that contributes to the students' understandings of language and curricular concepts needs to be carefully planned in order to be effective. In my program, the center work provides a flexible learning setting for students as they choose from five different centers with choices of activities within each center. It takes me considerable time to prepare and change the centers throughout the year but I now understand the importance of providing these opportunities for language development and academic learning. Students also work in teams for most of the second term. Many curricular tasks and teambuilding exercises are completed to develop oral language and cooperative learning skills. Over the course of the study, I learned to use the time the class was working in teams and at centers to interact with my students and to assess their learning, a topic that will be elaborated on in the next section.

Culturally sensitive participation, feedback and assessment. Generally, teaching practices have been based on European cultural norms and values (Au, 2001; Crago, 1992). However, changing demographics require educators to reexamine how traditional approaches are meeting the needs of diverse learners. An illustration of the difference in cultural norms occurred during a classroom visit by a First Nations storyteller and chief of a band (ASM, 01/05/07). As I listened to the guests, I observed that most of the students were sitting still and making eye contact with the speaker, which I interpreted as a sign of interest and attention. One First Nations girl, Cheyanne, was stretching and

yawning and, in my view, showing disrespect to our visitors. I was puzzled by Cheyanne's behavior for two reasons. First, she was generally an attentive and polite student and second, the storytelling activity should have had cultural relevance for her. After some reflection I hypothesized that Cheyanne may have been responding to the guest's cultural expectations, rather than mine. Another possibility is she may have been confused as to how to behave in an unfamiliar situation in which a First Nations chief is a guest in a school setting.

The following account provides an illustration of my experience of moving back and forth along the learning circle stages of Wholeness, Awareness, and Meaning. As I identified areas of growth in my practice, I executed and reflected upon new tactics and on occasion would return to the planning phase of the learning circle model in search of alternate ideas. (Appendix E) During whole class instruction, while teaching at the front of the class, I would either randomly choose students using popsicle sticks with their names on them to answer the questions or take responses from volunteers. Discussions usually took place at the back of the classroom where students were seated in a comfortable area with a rug, bench and pillows. The less formal atmosphere lent itself more to conversations among class members, rather than the traditional discussion pattern of the teacher asking a question to the student audience, choosing a volunteer to answer, and evaluating the response. Shifting the talk to another location in the room solved some problems but created new ones. The class looked to me to guide the dialogue and a handful of students dominated the conversations unless I called on specific children to make contributions.

I decided to try a different method of participating at a weekly class meeting in which we discussed positives, reminders, and upcoming events (ASM, 27/04/07). I chose speakers using the popsicle sticks with student names on them and hoped that random selection would result in increased input from some of the more reluctant students. The results were disappointing. Although the majority of the students selected contributed to the class discussion when their stick was drawn, it limited their participation afterward and reduced the amount of dialogue among students during the meeting. The following Friday I decided to adapt the method (ASM, 04/05/07). Before I began the meeting I handed all students popsicle sticks with their names on them and I told the students they were to give their sticks back to me once they had made a contribution to the discussion. I explained that I was doing this to ensure that everyone had a chance to talk.

I sensed early in the meeting that this adaptation was not going to produce the desired result. The structure of the activity made for a setting that was too controlled and limited the depth of the conversation during the meeting, similar to the previous week. Although most students could come up with something to say, the few that I was hoping to draw into the conversations sat in silence with their sticks in their hands. I was troubled by the results and abandoned the idea of using popsicle sticks to encourage participation at class meetings and concluded that some students should not be expected to perform in a whole-class situation until they become more comfortable working with a partner or in a smaller group. I had learned through the research of Au (2001) and Richard-Amato and Snow (1992) that First Nations students may not want to be singled out or “spotlighted” in a group. Upon reflection I realized that I had used a form of spotlighting, a technique proven to be unsuccessful in encouraging some students to

participate. I continued to look for ways to adjust my practice to accommodate the needs of all my students.

In order for me to more accurately assess all students' understanding of the curriculum I began to offer alternative ways for students to demonstrate their skills. For example, during our unit on the four food groups, students were instructed to make a balanced meal by cutting or drawing pictures of food to put on a paper plate. I gave the class the option of sharing their meals in front of the class or individually with me (RJ, 16/04/07). The majority of the students chose to present to the whole group. Interestingly, the four students who shared their work privately were from First Nations and Mexican backgrounds.

Another technique associated with culturally sensitive feedback is *wait time* or the pause between a teacher's question and a student's response. In the western world, silence is often interpreted as a lack of understanding or shyness but in fact may be due to cultural differences. In the First Nations cultures it may be customary to pause and weigh one's words before responding to a question or comment (Richard-Amato & Snow, 1992). I took this factor into consideration during lessons and provided additional wait time for students. When the students came to the realization that their classmates and I were prepared to wait for a response from them, they appeared to make more of an effort to contribute. Unfortunately, I believe that a lack of understanding of other cultures can result in teachers lowering expectations for students of cultures different than their own, damaging the students' self-esteem and limiting their academic success.

In spite of my efforts to create a variety of contexts in which students could work collaboratively and engage in productive talk, I was discouraged when the participation

of three First Nations girls remained minimal (RJ, 13/06/07). In search of solutions to this dilemma I drew from the literature on peer scaffolding (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000) culturally responsive teaching (Au, 2001) and a case study of an English language learner (Brock & Raphael, 2005). I needed to determine if the students' low levels of engagement were due to a lack of understanding of the material, disinterest, or discomfort with the methods of participation. During a partnered activity (RJ, 04/05/07) I observed two of the girls working well together. The more capable of the two students was able to pull the weaker student into the zone of proximal development and successfully complete part of a class assignment. In this instance both of the students were engaged in the activity. I came to the conclusion that participation of these students improved with peer scaffolding and both students experienced benefits, one by being helped and the other by helping.

Teaching and learning about cultural diversity. The following incidents illustrate how students can be taught to appreciate and show respect for cultures different than their own. As there were several Indo Canadian students in the class, I began my multicultural literacy unit with *Lights for Gita* (Gilmore, 1996), a book about a young Indo American girl and her family's celebration of Diwali. It was part of a collection of stories and activities in a unit designed to give students the opportunity to learn about cultural diversity. I had hoped that introducing with a story set in Indian culture I would be able to engage the Indo Canadian students and encourage them to share aspects of their culture with the class. This activity and the ensuing discussion opened the door for future conversations about culture during the year. Enthusiasm and comfort increased as the unit progressed and students who mostly listened to others during discussion times began

volunteering to share their holiday traditions. The students also asked questions of their classmates to learn more about others' First Nations, Mexican, and Western European cultural backgrounds. An example to illustrate this interest came during a Social Studies lesson (RJ, 03/04/07) when we were discussing spring celebrations, specifically the Christian Easter tradition of bunnies and egg hunts and the Indo Canadian Basaikhi practice of parades, fairs, free food and CDs. Students were anxious to talk about their family traditions and one astute member of the class, after hearing their description of the Basaikhi holiday, asked a classmate if other people who were not Punjabi could attend the celebrations. These responses provided evidence that the classroom conversations were contributing to the students' greater acceptance of differences in culture and improved self-esteem regarding their own. All of the students became more interested in sharing information about their own traditions and beliefs, as well as learning about other cultures with one exception.

Kuldip was a grade three boy who came from a traditional Indo Canadian home. He wore a patka, was a strict vegetarian, and showed strong cultural ties to the Punjabi religion and traditions. He did not eat any food containing meat or egg so during special classroom events or when I gave out treats or rewards I took his diet into consideration and offered Kuldip an alternative. It seemed that Kuldip expected the individual treatment and yet he did not show a similar regard to different cultural backgrounds of his classmates. The signs were subtle, such as turning his nose up at what other students ate and showing a general lack of interest in learning about cultures other than his own. It wasn't until the last week of the school year that I noted a positive shift in Kuldip's attitude toward other cultures. It occurred during our field trip to the Aboriginal Day

celebration at the end of June (RJ, 04/07/07). Hosted at another school, the activities included a powwow, native dancing, traditional First Nations games and a free lunch offering many choices, among them bannock, a fried bread. During a game of musical chairs the students from various classes and schools were instructed to dance around during the singing and drumming and to find a chair when the music stopped. Kuldip chose to watch rather than participate and he sat beside me as we looked on. I pointed out to him a young First Nations boy who was displaying a talent for traditional dance. As Kuldip observed the youngster more closely and was smiling I interpreted his response to mean that Kuldip was coming to the understanding that he could show appreciation for another culture while staying true to his own. I was excited to witness his change in attitude. I created a continuum on which to place the students in terms of their knowledge and attitude with respect to their own culture and that of their classmates as seen in Figure 4. Initially, I placed Kuldip toward the left side of the scale, with the majority of the class neutrally positioned in the center. At the conclusion of the study all students had moved further to the right end and they showed greater appreciation for their own and others' culture. I credit some of this positive shift in student attitudes to the use of culturally responsive teaching methods and materials.

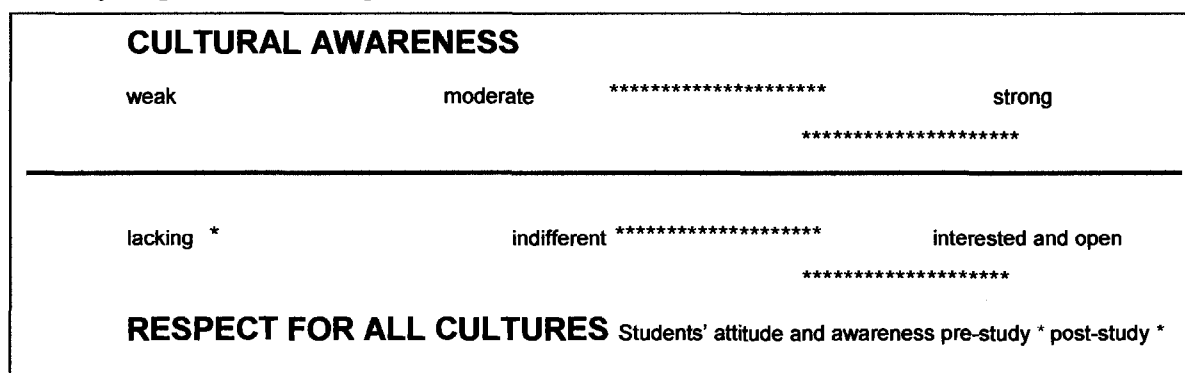


Figure 3. Knowledge and Respect for Culture Continuum

I concluded the classroom implementation of the study in the final week of June. As the students and I celebrated the end of school, I asked the students to share what they enjoyed, appreciated and would remember most about our year together (RJ, 26/06/07). I was interested to learn if there would be any mention of the new strategies and approaches I had implemented during my study, that is, those that reflect a culturally responsive approach to teaching and social constructivist view of learning. First, we brainstormed activities. Then the students were given paper balloons on which to draw or write their personal favorites (Appendix O). I then categorized the student responses using the methods and strategies found in my instructional inventory. The data are represented in Table 1. Note. 2 of the 21 students were absent on the day of the exercise.

Table 1. Student Feedback on Favorite Activities

Activity	Method of Instruction	#
Science demonstrations	Direct Instruction	3
Math drills	Direct Instruction	16
Guided Writing (Classroom Books)	Direct Instruction	2
Cooperative Learning	Interactive Instruction	11
Literature Circles	Interactive Instruction	4
Readers Theatre	Interactive Instruction	2
Barrier Games (oral)	Interactive Instruction	1
Reading for Meaning	Indirect Instruction	2
Center Work	Indirect Instruction	3
Science Experiments	Experiential Learning	8
Field Trips	Experiential Learning	8

I expected to see experiments and field trips as popular activities among the students. Several students mentioned math drills which fell under the category of direct instruction. This was understandable given that many of the drills took the form of games. I was disappointed that so few students mentioned the Barrier Games and I attribute this to it being a new strategy the students may not have remembered by name. Through this exercise I was able to identify strategies and methods that I had previously had in my instructional repertoire, as well as some promising practices that had been recommended in the research for second language learners. Communicative games that involve an information gap, identified as Barrier Games will be added to my instructional inventory, as well as specific instructional tactics that provide opportunities for oral language development to be woven into many lessons. Examples of these are Think / Pair / Share, Vanishing Cloze, Dictogloss, and Eye-to-Eye / Knee-to-Knee. (Appendix L)

My commitment to a literacy program that is built on the principles of culturally responsive instruction and a social view of learning was strengthened through the use of quantitative data collected on students in the class who qualified for the ESD program. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Tests (PPVT) were administered by the ESD teacher to measure the students' receptive language abilities in September 2006 and again in June 2007. The results of these tests were shared with me as part of the ESD and classroom teachers' collaborative practice and can be seen in Table 2. I have provided the Stanine scores, which were a standard used by the ESD teachers in the district to determine eligibility for the program. Students with a Stanine of three or below qualified for English Skills Development classes, although students with higher scores were also included in the program based on the results of additional assessments.

Table 2. Peabody Stanine Scores for the School Year 2006-2007

Student	September	June
A	3	4
B	3	5
C	4	5
D	2	5
E	4	5
F	2	4
G	4	4
H	Late registrant	3

The PPVT test results showed an improvement in raw scores for every ESD student and it appeared that considerable gains had been made for those students advancing two or more stanine levels within a ten month period. These results were surprising to the ESD teacher, particularly when the PPVT test results of the same students from previous years were compared to the 2006-2007 scores. I see the value of using a test such as the PPVT to assess ESD students' performance at the beginning of school year and to measure their growth at the end. The results of the tests can also help to inform classroom instruction. As I reviewed the student scores I took into consideration the influence of other factors that can affect student achievement. Student attendance, additional services offered at the school through learning assistance and speech therapy, as well as home support were taken into account as I attempted to assess

the effectiveness of the techniques I had implemented in my study and to address the question of credibility. The data was triangulated using classroom assessments for literacy, the researcher's journal, action step matrices and student feedback. The results contributed to my belief that knowledge of second language acquisition and the implementation of strategies that supported language development had been effective in building vocabulary and language development for the ESD students.

I now conclude the classroom implementation phase of my action research project. My goal was to create a program that was built upon the principles of culturally responsive instruction and a social view of learning. Through the processes of trying new strategies, reflecting on the experiences, extending, adapting and rejecting strategies I have discovered several instructional approaches that I am convinced assist specifically with language development and that I will continue to use to address the literacy learning needs of the students in my classroom.

Meaning Made of Classroom Practice

This self-initiated inquiry into my classroom literacy program with the goal to improve ESD students' engagement and achievement took on a new direction as I became more familiar with the literature on teaching students of diverse backgrounds. Rather than commencing the study with the implementation of strategies, I chose to focus my attention on building a learning community and creating conditions for increased conversation among students for language and content learning. As students' self-esteem increased regarding their own culture, their interest and respect for each other's culture also increased as well as their motivation to learn. At that point I introduced new literacy

strategies and methods recommended for use with students of diverse backgrounds demonstrating my belief that relationships precede learning.

The literature on second language acquisition and the role of oral language in literacy development and learning prompted me to provide additional opportunities for the students to engage in productive talk. Through this study I also gained a greater understanding of scaffolding and its value to all students for both concept and learning community development. Through scaffolding students can improve their understanding of academic content and help create a classroom learning community through dialogue, a common goal and relationship building.

Some critical incidents emphasized the need for teachers to have core knowledge of language learning and teaching and a positive attitude toward diversity. With the recent trends in immigration, some of the European based traditional teaching methods and beliefs about learning are no longer relevant or appropriate given the diverse background of students. I believe an effective teacher today is one who holds high expectations for all of the students and acknowledges and values students' home languages and cultures.

Teacher Leadership and Learning Communities

Next, I will address the third research question: How can this inquiry be conducted and shared in a way that will facilitate teacher leadership and increase the learning capacity of the school or district? As I proceeded with the classroom research and began implementing new strategies, I naturally wanted to share my discoveries and excitement with colleagues. I looked for avenues to introduce new learning through new

patterns of professional communication. I began by leading informally with fellow teachers who shared my commitment to continual learning and student improvement by sharing materials, expertise and inviting them to try new strategies and methods that I had found to be effective during my study. The ultimate goal of improving teaching and learning required me to step out of my comfort zone and challenge the status quo of the school. I was, however, familiar with the norms of the school and was aware that staffroom conversations about teaching practices and sharing in the successes of others were rare occurrences and regarded by some as self-promotion. I considered my biggest challenge to be the conducting and sharing the results of the study in a way that would facilitate teacher leadership and increase the learning capacity of the school. Barth (2006) calls important matters that teachers rarely openly discuss *nondiscussables*. These include such topics as classroom practice, the nature of the relationships within a school and issues of race and culture. Yet, a learning community cannot exist without such challenges to the status quo. Leadership skills are required to make suggested improvements seem possible. I wanted to introduce other colleagues to the use of teacher inquiry as self-initiated professional development and share the knowledge I had gained through research into my own practice.

Brown (2004) pointed out the need for learning community symmetry in which teachers need to experience community themselves if they are to create it for their students. Although I was inspired by my ability to create a classroom community in which the members worked collaboratively, I was less confident in my ability to effect change at the school level. I had been professionally ready to learn about new ways of teaching and learning myself but I could not assume that my colleagues would be open to

seeking solutions for problems they identified in their practice. I began the critical phase by examining factors that facilitate and inhibit genuine school change. I believed that an improved understanding of the change processes would assist me in my goal to become a catalytic educator with respect to the instruction of second language learners in the mainstream classroom.

School culture. According to the literature on instructional leadership and school improvement (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006; Barth, 2001; Fullan, 2002; Mitchell & Sackney, 2000) schools where teachers share craft knowledge and decision making and work in teams are not typical. Inhibitions to teacher leadership within a school can include interpersonal issues, school traditions, and individual teachers' feelings of ownership of materials and students. Teachers, often conservative in their thinking and having traditionally worked in isolation, may not have the necessary skills or the will to function effectively in a group. I felt fortunate to have a few colleagues with whom I could share knowledge, materials, successes, and concerns during my study.

Perhaps some of the culture of schools can be explained by how each person defines his or her role as an educator. While some teachers work strictly in their own classrooms, others may sponsor extra-curricular activities, supervise and mentor new and fellow teachers, attend regularly scheduled meetings to discuss programs, share expertise through workshop presentations or become active in the teachers' union. When a teacher sees choices rather than professional responsibility, in learning from teaching through observation or conversation, contributing to the school as a whole, and helping colleagues, the likelihood of creating change or establishing collegiality is small. I realize now that one's capacity as a leader can be easily diminished by the culture of a school.

However, it can also be increased among colleagues who have a positive orientation to learning and are willing to adjust their practice to improve student learning.

In my view, our school climate has not always been conducive to interactions among its teachers or to change. The physical layout of the school with the gym in the center does not lend itself to interaction between teachers that may occur if classrooms were across from as well as beside each other. I recall one principal describing the school as one in which the teachers worked in isolation in their classrooms, much like living on moats. In the past twenty years the school has undergone changes in administration that have been accompanied by the implementation of new practices and opportunities for professional growth. Although the school has had a good reputation in the community, I believe the status quo has remained much the same, with limited orientation to collaboration and change.

The following incident describes an administrator's attempt to break down the isolation and provide an opportunity for teachers to talk about their practices. In January of 2007 the newly assigned principal offered to take our classes so teachers could have time to discuss new math and writing programs (ASM, 04/05/07). Although the meetings were deemed to be voluntary, there was an expectation that all teachers would participate. Problems arose immediately when one colleague refused to work with another and changes were made to accommodate this teacher. I met with colleagues three separate times. On two of these occasions the conversation fell short of collaboration. The objective of the meetings was to discuss how to provide a coordinated approach in our math and writing programs. The first meeting's tone was set by one teacher's comments

about the limited learning potential of some students and revealed to me complacency and blame for the children for their lack of success.

During a second meeting while we reviewed the books recommended to support the writing program (ASM, 07/05/07) the same individual told two of us which books she used in her classroom, and therefore should not be instructional choices for either of us. When I spoke up in favor of my colleague and I having more choice in the use of books, she informed us that if this were the case, she would not use the program. In a similar incident I asked to borrow some grade three anthologies that were stored in her classroom. When I told her the story I was planning to read she became upset, slamming the books on a desk. At that point I left and went to see another colleague who offered me an alternative. Barth (2001) also describes many teachers as seeming to lack the personal, interpersonal, and group skills essential to work together successfully. During these two meetings I experienced the type of difficulties that can arise when working with colleagues who are resistant to change. I realized that I would have to be more observant, flexible, and sensitive to other people's needs in the role of a teacher leader (Appendix G).

Collegial conversations. Although the provision of time by the principal had been a positive step toward the creation of a learning community, as Treemant et al., (2000) claim:

Collaboration must be built upon principles of parity, adaptation, interdependence, dialogue, self-study, multiple perspectives, orientation toward change, a concern for student learning and shared values, power and control. (p. #37)

Fortunately, I had colleagues inside and outside of the school that I met with on a regular basis in after-school meetings for reading, writing and ESD (RJ, 15/05/07). During the months of April, May and June of 2007 I worked closely with the ESD teacher at the school who was completing courses to obtain her ESD Specialist certification (ASM, 24/05/07). I read several articles and chapters to add to my understanding of language acquisition and teaching of ESD students. We spent time talking about the course material and how we could implement strategies and tactics in our classrooms to enhance student learning, as well as complement each others' programs. I was looking forward to a two-day presentation by an ESD Specialist from another district which would be attended by approximately twenty teachers in the district, including ESD, Learning Assistance, classroom and substitute teachers (ASM, 05/06/07). It was in these settings that I was more comfortable sharing my successes and challenges. My belief in the social view of learning, which through the work of Mitchell and Sackney (2001) has also been connected to teachers' professional growth and the development of learning communities, was reaffirmed.

Unfortunately the end of the school year brought institutional changes to the ESD program with respect to staff and program delivery (RJ, 04/07/07). It was difficult to sustain momentum in the face of these changes, having spent the past three months working closely with the ESD coordinator, attending chapter meetings and workshops, and building my knowledge base for second language learning and teaching.

As I looked ahead to sharing my research and making future commitments to learning and changing, I wanted to improve my understanding of change by examining

teachers' resistance to change more systematically, in terms of unmet needs or inhibiting conditions.

Change processes. Leithwood (1992) describes two types of change: *first-order* and *second-order* change. An example of first-order change in a school would be improving the technical, instructional activities of the school through close monitoring of teachers' and students' classroom work. It often involves doing more or less of what we are already doing and new learning is not required. An example of second-order change, would be building a shared vision, improving communication and developing collaborative decision-making processes. In contrast to first-order change, second-order change requires a person to do something different from what they have done before and involves new learning. Maxwell (1993) outlines a myriad of reasons for why people resist change including fear of the unknown, disruption of routines, fear of failure, complacency, lack of respect for the leader, negative thinking and more. He also categorizes people according to their response to change as being innovators, early adopters, middle adopters, late adopters, or laggards.

Understanding the change process and how others respond to change has helped me to understand myself and articulate my role as a teacher leader. I am an early adopter, that is, receptive to new ideas and creative in classroom application. By engaging in teacher inquiry and changing the way I teach, I can now become a change agent for others by offering workshops, modeling promising practices, and sharing with colleagues the strategies I found to be effective with a diverse group of students.

Re-culturing of schools. Fullan (2002) suggests a re-culturing of schools by improving relationships, creating and sharing of knowledge, and encouraging leadership

at all levels of the organization. As I began the second phase of the research in September of 2007, it was with a new administrator, several new teachers, and a feeling of optimism. The operating norms of the school were beginning to change, creating conditions for shared leadership. Early in the school year as part of the district's literacy initiative, it was recommended that teachers within and among schools use common tools for reading assessments. Because I was familiar with one of the assessments, I was asked by a few colleagues to assist them with the administration of the reading assessment in their classrooms. On one occasion a substitute teacher was placed in my classroom and provided me with the time to model the assessment for another teacher. Other times I assisted teachers after school on the procedures involved in the assessment. The shift to distributed leadership provided a forum for teachers to share knowledge-of-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1994) with fellow teachers without the risk of being ostracized. It is interesting that a district initiative provided an opportunity for me to share assessment strategies I had implemented in my classroom three years earlier. The situation gave greater meaning to the statement, "Some people change when they see the light; others when they feel the heat" (Schroeder, *).

Organizations such as schools are built on the hierarchical model and the premise that change occurs with the transmission of information. Reeves (2006) compares the traditional way that leaders seek change through a hierarchal model as flawed and compares it to a children's game of telephone in which one child whispers a message to another, who whispers to another, and so on. By the time the message gets to the final child, the original message is lost. Similarly, as the message travels from the superintendent to administrators to teachers in the classroom the district initiatives lose

their meaning and impact. Mitchell and Sackney (2001) suggest that the capacity for change is best developed simultaneously at personal, interpersonal, and organizational levels. A teacher may be more likely to follow the practice of a trusted colleague rather than the recommendations of a leader far removed from the classroom. Reeves (2006) recommends that school leaders identify “islands of excellence” (p. #37) within the school culture and have those individuals help create systemic change.

Finally I describe a critical incident (RJ, 09/01/08) to illustrate how the act of challenging the status quo can empower some people and threaten others. For years, we had an administrator who had his pet projects such as cross country, track and field and speech arts that everyone participated in and teachers on staff who opposed concerts of any kind. With a new administrator and many new staff members, a low-key Christmas performance was suggested early in the school year and at the beginning of December eight of the ten classroom teachers agreed to participate. The teacher who was spearheading the idea went to the principal and told him that a number of teachers were interested in having a concert and was encouraged by him to proceed with the plans. A time and agenda was set for the performance. On the day of the concert parents arrived and all the classes were invited down to the gym on the announcements. Surprisingly, only the classes that were performing attended and the other teachers chose to keep their students occupied in their rooms. The concert was enjoyed by everyone involved—students, parents, teachers and the administrator. We felt the goal to have a low-key school event that gave students the chance to perform for their families and schoolmates and contribute to the school community had been accomplished. However, there were some parents who were disappointed that some of their children had not been able to

attend the concert to see their friends and siblings perform. These parents expressed their feelings first to the principal and second to the teachers involved. This event caused the kind of hard feelings that are bound to occur when power is shared and people differ in what they think, believe, and value.

The concert was a challenge to the school tradition and the previous management leadership style. The matter has since been addressed at a staff meeting in which the principal shared his roles in the school, one of which is to encourage staff, parents, and students to take on leadership roles wherever and whenever possible. This style of shared leadership, characteristic of a transformational model (Leithwood, 1992), is foreign to some teachers and although it can promote individual growth, it creates frustration for those who are accustomed to top-down decision making. Brown (2004) describes the challenge of shifting the power from the top of a bureaucratic pyramid to different levels of an organization. The conflict that can arise from a change in roles and routines is regarded as a natural occurrence and an opportunity for growth within the organization. However resistance to the change can range from passive indifference to active sabotage of the efforts of an administrator or teacher leader who is working toward change. Some teachers isolate themselves from colleagues who might cause them to question and improve their practice. Others openly criticize fellow teachers who want to share new learning and withhold craft knowledge that might assist a struggling teacher. Those teachers who are not psychologically or professionally prepared to engage in collegial relationships may inhibit change and impede teacher leadership. For a learning community to develop, it is important for new ideas to be supported and for conflict to be resolved in a mature and professional manner.

This completes the phase of the project in which I show my commitment to improving teaching and learning in my classroom through participation in meetings, workshops, and collegial conversations. The literature on school reform combined with reflective journaling provided insight into the challenges of teacher leadership and genuine school change.

Meaning Made of School Reform

The potential for the creation of a learning community within a school is dependent upon the quality of the relationships that exist there. The premise that relationships precede learning can be applied to the school setting as well as to the classroom. Just as students appeared to engage more fully in activities that would improve learning when they learned to respect one another's culture, teachers are more open to learning when they see and respect diversity in responses to change. Barth (2001) claims many school facilities are congenial, but few are collegial. I believe sustainable school change will be possible only when the majority of teachers engage in reflective practice and collaborative conversations and model for others that learning about teaching is part of the job of teaching. Teacher preparation programs that make reflection, inquiry and collaboration an integral part of their training could help in the development of teachers who have the attributes, knowledge and skills to become competent members of the profession (Jacobsen & Hunter, 2003). Teachers need to develop trusting, helpful relationships with each other in order to improve their practice and build professional learning communities.

Culture and Communication

I will conclude the Meaning stage of the inquiry with a discussion of the themes of culture and communication as they related to teaching in the classroom and to the leadership potential within the school.

The impact of culture. First, I have learned that being responsive to the diverse ethnic and language backgrounds of the students and having a knowledge and appreciation of different cultural groups enables me to develop closer relationships and create meaningful learning experiences for my students. Through the selection of culturally relevant materials and provision of alternative forms of participation and assessment methods, I can help students increase their engagement and improve their understanding. Second, I believe that the organizational culture and the way in which people behave and interact with one another can inhibit the teacher leadership potential at the school. Some people find it difficult to recognize leaders among themselves and I have seen teacher leaders who have been passionate about their work ostracized by other staff members. I appreciated the risk involved in sharing what I have learned through this inquiry and I minimized the risk to myself by presenting my first workshop on ESD strategies in another district. The positive feedback and enjoyment I received from the workshop experience has inspired me to share my discoveries with interested colleagues in my own district. Although I am anxious to share the new knowledge and promising practices, I understand that some of my colleagues may not be ready. I will remain patient, become more expert in the ideas and use of strategies for oral language development and offer to share with colleagues if and when they are prepared to learn.

The importance of communication. Through this inquiry I have become aware of the importance of communication in classrooms and schools. Language, is a means to communicate and also a tool learners use to construct meaning. Communication can impact relationships in the classroom among students, parents, and teachers; good communication is required for teachers to become familiar with the family values and beliefs of their students and to deliver a culturally compatible program. The ability to communicate is also necessary for the development of a learning community and effective school reform. The message of a superintendent may be lost as it travels from the district office to the teachers in the classroom. School administrators, therefore, need to be able to articulate the change initiatives to their staffs. Teachers and teacher leaders need to know how to listen to the views of others and in turn to share knowledge and new ideas without offending or threatening fellow teachers. Without solid personal and interpersonal communication skills, the capacity for change is limited.

Summary

This chapter included the Awareness and Meaning phases of the learning circle model. The Awareness phase began with the appreciative inquiry into my classroom, school and district practices as they were analyzed with respect to a culturally responsive and social constructivist view of learning. I shared the results of the appreciative inquiry, identified the areas of intended growth and subsequent goals. I continued in the Awareness phase with my implementation of promising practices and documentation in action step matrices and journal entries. I analyzed critical incidents in terms of student and teacher learning within the classroom, school, and district. In the Meaning phase I

made sense of my work through reflection and connections to the literature that informed the study. Finally I presented my developing understandings and beliefs in terms of two key themes: culture and communication.

CHAPTER V: REFLECTIONS AND COMMITMENTS

In this chapter I enter the fourth stage of the learning circle, that of Commitment. It is here that I share discoveries made during the inquiry and plans for future professional growth. I will discuss the personal change that has accompanied my classroom teacher-research journey as they apply to my new professional identity.

This thesis reports my purposeful and reflective response to the language, culture, and family income changes that have brought students with a greater variety of needs to my elementary school. This study was designed to explore and describe ways in which I could, as a classroom teacher, address the literacy needs of a diverse group of students in a mainstream classroom. As a researcher who is also an experienced teacher I examined the literature that documented research-based recommendations for teaching ESL/D learners and implemented new instructional strategies and approaches to accommodate the different language proficiency levels of the students. In response to a review of the literature and through the process of teacher inquiry, I adapted instruction with the goal of improving student achievement in literacy. As my additional knowledge and skills developed, I shared my learning with other interested colleagues so that together we would be better prepared to make confident classroom and school-based decisions about literacy instruction.

Through teacher inquiry and reflection I was able to direct my own professional development to construct professional knowledge and improve the learning of my students. As a result of the inquiry I have a stronger knowledge base with respect to second language learning and literacy and I am better able to connect theory and practice when selecting strategies to use with my students, particularly ESD students.

The interrelationship of the subjective nature of our experiences with the more objective knowledge of the literature has been emphasized throughout the research process. As my knowledge base for second language acquisition grew and I became more familiar with the social constructivist view of learning, oral language development took on more meaning. This combined with the literature on culturally responsive teaching provided me with a new way of thinking about teaching and learning. The underlying belief that relationships precede learning made learning community development integral to the study. Traditionally I have spent the first term of the school year getting to know my students, establishing routines, and outlining expectations for group work and behavior. These conditions help to support classroom tasks designed for interaction, language development, and learning. As students construct knowledge together they learn to express themselves more clearly and improve their understanding of concepts. Similarly, congenial relationships may be a precondition to collaboration and rich dialogue among staff members. Teachers who view collaboration and shared learning as a professional responsibility can articulate and model that belief in their practice. Learning community development in the classroom and school requires a conscious long-term commitment and for many schools, dramatic re-culturing.

In terms of first-order change I have created a model for my classroom practice that is built on the principles of a social and collaborative view of language learning. Both culturally responsive instruction and cooperative learning have become essential parts of my teaching practice. I will demonstrate my commitment to culturally responsive instruction by providing a supportive and inviting classroom environment and continue to enhance my understanding of students' cultures, remaining open to teaching approaches

that address cultural differences and preferences. Knowledge of Aboriginal history and culture has helped me to appreciate some of the struggles facing First Nations people in my own community and to understand the importance of creating classrooms that reflect the aboriginal perspective.

I also will make regular use of my instructional inventory to monitor my teaching practice and to insure that I do not become complacent and rely on the more common but less engaging teaching methods and tactics. I have added culturally responsive strategies to my instructional inventory and I will plan daily oral language activities to provide a foundation for literacy and learning in all areas of the curriculum and to meet the prescribed learning outcomes for speaking and listening. Although it was reassuring to learn that many of the techniques and activities recommended for the English skill development of students were already familiar strategies, I continue to look for new ways to motivate and engage my students. The internalization of knowledge and strategies for oral language development and social constructivist learning gained through this inquiry have added to the satisfaction I get from my career as a classroom teacher.

I believe that second-order change occurred through my reflective practice. My ability to be introspective combined with an awareness of the importance of acknowledging students' home cultures will assist me as a teacher of students from diverse backgrounds. The value of teacher inquiry to empower practitioners and to raise the professionalism of teaching by becoming constructors of knowledge is both exciting and challenging. The learning circle process will provide the framework for future inquiries into my practice. Teachers who continue to question and stay informed of new curriculum, recent research, and promising practices to improve their own teaching and

student learning can provide valuable expertise to colleagues and model for others that learning from practice contributes to one's efficacy. This experience has given me conscious competence to deal with issues of diversity in the classroom and the confidence to help colleagues discover the benefits of using a culturally responsive and social constructivist approach to teaching. My belief that relationships precede learning has become a mantra for me and will guide my interactions with students and fellow teachers.

This action research study has also helped me to define my role in terms of a teacher leader. In the literature on instructional leadership I was able to identify with teacher leaders who lead informally by sharing their expertise, asking hard questions, and modeling collaboration. With my improved understanding of second language acquisition I feel an obligation to share the promising practices I have learned with other classroom teachers so they too can provide language support for their ESD students. I will focus my energies on working with willing colleagues, yet remain open and inviting with others. I will watch for opportunities where I can use my expertise with colleagues in the school and district and continue to be an agent in my own professional development by setting goals, trying new ideas, reflecting on my teaching and working to improve classroom practice. In the words of Maxine Green "One of the marks of a master teacher is the ability to shape and reshape the materials of their craft" (as cited in Allen, 1999, p. #143). In this study, I have been empowered by opportunities to reshape my theoretical understanding and my repertoire of teaching strategies and tactics, as well as my view of myself as a professional. Finally, I have begun to reshape my professional community toward a learning orientation.

REFERENCES

- Ackerman, R., & Mackenzie, S. (2006). Uncovering teacher leadership. *Journal of Educational Leadership*, 63, 66-71.
- Alberta Education (2005). *Our words, our ways: Teaching First Nations, Metis and Inuit learners*. Aboriginal Services Branch and Learning and Teaching Resources Branch.
- <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/resources/cross/ourwordsourways.aspx>
- Allen, J. (1999). *Class actions: Teaching for social justice in elementary and middle school*. New York,: Teachers College Press.
- Andrews, J. (1985). *Very last first time*. Vancouver and Toronto: A Groundwood Book, Douglas and McIntyre.
- Au, K. (2001, July/August). Culturally responsive instruction as a dimension of new literacies. *Reading Online*, 5(1). Available
- http://www.readingonline.org/newliteracies/lit_index.asp?HREF=/newliteracies/xu/index.html
- Bader, L. (2005). *BADER reading and language inventory* (5th ed.). Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Barth, R. (Ed.). (2001). *Learning by heart*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Barth, R. (2006). Improving relationships within the schoolhouse. *Journal of Educational Leadership*, 63(6), 8-13.
- BC Ministry of Education Special Programs Branch (1999). *English as a second language learners: A guide for classroom teachers*. BC: Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data.

- BC Ministry of Education Policy Document: K - 12 Funding - Aboriginal Education, (2002). http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/funding_abed.htm
- BC Ministry of Education Policy Document: K - 12 Funding - English as a Second Language, (2002). http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/funding_esl.htm
- BC Ministry of Education. (1998). Shared learnings: Integrating BC aboriginal content K-10. BC: Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data.
- British Columbia School Trustees Association. (2007). *ESL forum: Educating the children of the world in BC classrooms*. BC: Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data.
- BCTF (2006). The history of Aboriginal education. Excerpted from *Indigenous teachers: Narratives of identity and change*, masters thesis by Christine Stewart.
- Bennett, B., & Rolheiser, C. (2001). *Beyond Monet: the artful science of instructional integration*. Toronto, Ontario: Bookation Inc.
- Bray, J., Lee, J., Smith, L., & Yorks, L. (2000). *Collaborative inquiry in practice: Action, reflection, and making meaning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Britton, J. (1993). *Language and learning* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Brock, C., & Raphael, T. (2005). *Windows to language, literacy, and culture*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Brown, D. (Ed.). (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.
- Brown, W. (2004). *Building a learning community through restitution: A case study*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK.

- Brown, W., & McGregor, C. (Feb., 2006). *Blogging for change: Expanding the language of teacher learning*. Poster presented at Westcast Conference on Teacher Education, Vancouver, BC.
- Brownlie, F., Feniak, C., McCarthy, V. (2000). *Promoting success in your classroom: instruction and assessment of ESL learners*. Langley, BC: Minuteman Press.
- Brownlie, F. (2005). *Grand conversations, thoughtful responses: a unique approach to literature circles*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Portage and Main Press.
- Burnaby, B. (1987). Language for native, ethnic or recent immigrant groups: What's the difference? *TESL Canada Journal*, 4(2): 9-27.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. (1999). Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in communities. *Review of Research in Education* 24, 249-305.
- Cole, Robert W. (Ed.) (1995). *Educating everybody's children: Diverse strategies for diverse learners: What research and practice say about improving achievement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Cooperrider, D. & Srivastva, S. (1990). Appreciative inquiry in organizational life. *Appreciative management and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Crago, M. (1992). Communicative interaction and second language acquisition: An Inuit example. *TEOSL Quarterly*, 26(3): 487-505.
- Cranton, P. (2006). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide for educators of adults*. San Francisco: Wiley and Sons.
- Creswell, John W. (Ed.). (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.

- Davy, A. (2005). *Nos histories: a reflection in democratic discourse in a French primary classroom*. A master's thesis. University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, BC.
- Davy, A., & Brown, W. (2006). Turning show 'n tell into democratic dialogue. *Networks Online Journal of Teacher Research* 9(1).
- DeVillar, R., Faltis, C. & Cummins, J. (1994). *Cultural diversity in schools: from rhetoric to practice*. Albany NY: New York Press.
- Dufour, R., Eaker, R. & Karhanek, G (2004). *From "Learning for the few" to "all kids can learn" to "all kids will learn – or else!"* In *Whatever it takes: How professional learning communities respond when kids don't learn*. 13-27. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.
- Earl, L. (2006) *Rethinking classroom assessment with purpose in mind: Assessment for learning, assessment as learning, assessment of learning*. Western Northern Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Education.
- Epstein, R. & Xu, X. (2003). *Roots and wings: Teaching English as a second dialect to Aboriginal students – A review of the literature*. Unpublished document.
<http://www.extension.usask.ca/ExtensionDivision/about/Staff/e-h/epsteinvitea.htm>
- Flores, B., Cousins-Tefet, P. & Diaz, E. (1991). Transforming deficit myths about learning, language and culture. *Language Arts*, 68: 369-379.
- Fosnot, C. (1996). *Constructivism: theory, perspectives and practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Freeman, D. & Freeman, Y. (2001). [Review of the book- *Between worlds: Access to second language acquisition* (2nd ed.)] in *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, 5(4).
- Fullan, M. (1994). *Teacher leadership: A failure to conceptualize*. In D. Walling (Ed.) *Teachers as Leaders: Perspectives on the Professional Development of Teachers*. 241-253. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Foundation.
- Fullan, M.(2002). The change leader. *Educational Leadership*, 59(8). Alexandria,VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: theory, research and practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Gibbons, P. (Ed.). (1991). *Learning to learn in a second language*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Gibbons, P. (2002). *Scaffolding language scaffolding learning: teaching second language learners in the mainstream classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Gilmore, R. (1996). *Lights for Gita*. Toronto, Ontario: Second Story Press.
- Glanz, J. (2006). *What every principal should know about instructional leadership*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.
- Grisham, D.L. (2000).Teacher voices: research as professional development. *Reading Online*, 2. <http://www.readingonline.org/editorial/august2000/index.html>
- Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y. (1981). Epistemological and methodological bases of naturalistic inquiry. *Educational Communication and Technology: Journal of Theory, Research, and Development* 30(4) 233-252.
- Howell, W. (1982). *The empathetic communicator*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub. Co.

Immigrant Services Society of BC. (2007). *Faces of refugees: Settlement patterns in the Greater Vancouver Regional District*.

Jacobsen, M. & Hunter, W. (2003). *International Electronic Journal For Leadership in Learning* 7(11) <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~iejll/volume7/mohr.htm>

Kerrigan, J. (2005). *Teaching mathematics for understanding*. A master's thesis.
University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, BC.

Larsen-Freeman, D. & Long, Michael H., (1991). [Review of the book- An introduction to second language acquisition research.] and Between worlds: Access to second language acquisition (2nd ed.)] in *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* ,1(3).

Law, B. & Eckes, M. (2000). *The more-than-just-surviving handbook: ESL for every classroom teacher*. (2nd ed.) Winnipeg, Manitoba: Peguis Publishers.

Leavitt, R. (1992). Language and cultural content in native education. *The Canadian Modern Language review*, 47(2): 266-279.

Lee, C. & Smagorinsky, P. (2000). *Vygotskian perspectives on literacy research: constructing meaning through collaborative inquiry*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Leithwood, K. (1992). The move toward transformational leadership. *Journal of Educational Leadership*. Feb. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Lessow-Hurley, J. (Ed.). (2003). *Meeting the needs of second language learners: An educator's guide*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- Marzano, R., McNutty, B., & Waters, T. (2004). Leadership that sparks learning. *Journal of Educational Leadership*. Apr. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Maxwell, J. (1993). *Developing the leader within you*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
- Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study application in education*. Jossey-Bass.
- Mitchell, C. & Sackney, L. (2000). Profound improvement: Building capacity for a leaning community. Netherlands: Swets and Zeitlinger. (pp. 93-109).
- Mitchell, C. & Sackney, L. (2001). Communities of leaders: developing leadership capacity for a learning community. Paper presented at American Educational Research Association.
- Newman, J. (1987). Learning to teach by uncovering our assumptions. *Language Arts*, 64 (7): 727-737. <http://www.lupinworks.com/article/learn.html>
- Raham, H. (2001). Effective schools research: Tracking the trends. *Education Analyst* Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education. Kelowna, BC: Okanagan Bookworks. http://www.sae.ca/analyst/C_012.3_IH_LON.php
- Raptis, H. & Fleming, T. (2005). Using action research in British Columbia: preliminary findings from school improvement projects in seven schools, 2002-2004. *Leadership in Learning*, 9(1). <http://www.uclagary.ca/~iejll>
- Rearick, M. & Feldman, A. (1998) Orientations, purposes and reflection: a framework for understanding action research. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 15, 333-349.
- Reeves, D. (2006). Of hubs, bridges and networks. *Journal of Educational Leadership*, 63(8), 32-37.

- Richard-Amato, P. & Snow, M. (1992). *The multicultural classroom: readings for content-area teachers*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Sagor, R. (1992). *How to conduct collaborative research*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Sagor, R. (1997). Collaborative action research for educational change. In A. Hargreaves (Ed.) *Rethinking Educational Change with Heart and Mind*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. (pp. 169-191).
- Sagor, R. (2000). *Guiding school improvement with action research*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. (1988). *Instructional models, strategies, methods, and skills*. <http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/docs/policy/approach/instrapp03.html>
- Schroeder, C. (n.d.).
- Senge, P. (1990/2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. Currency Doubleday: Toronto.
- Shade, B., Kelly, M. & Oberg, M. (1997). *Creating culturally responsive classrooms*. American Psychological Association. Washington, D.C.
- Slutsky, R. (2005). Teacher tales of action research: trials and triumphs [Electronic version]. *Leadership in Learning*, 9(4), 1-21.
- Statistics Canada (2006). <http://www.stat.can.ca>
- Stiffarm, L. (1998). Introduction. In L. Stiffarm (Ed.), *As we see...Aboriginal pedagogy* (pp. xi – xiv). Saskatoon, SK: University Extension Press.
- Thompson, L. (2006). Literacy development for English language learners. *ESL Magazine*, Nov. 1-4.

- Toohy, K. (1992). We teach English as a second language to bilingual students. *Socio-Political Aspects of ESL*. Toronto, ON: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Press, 87-96.
- Treemant, A., Bernhardt, E., Rodriguez-Munoz, M., & Aiello, M. (2000). Dialogue among teachers that benefits second language learners. *Middle School Journal*, Nov. 30-38.
- United States Department of Agriculture (2006). *The impact of poverty on learning: Implications in the classroom*. Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.
- http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/family/in_focus/communities_if_poverty.html
- Wells, G. (1994). Introduction: teacher research and educational change. In *changing school from within: creating communities of inquiry* (pp.1-35). Toronto: OISE
- Wild, J., Helmer, S., Tanaka, P. & Dean, S. (2006). *A "crisis in ESL education" in BC schools*. E.S.L. Provincial Specialist Association, BC.
- Wilson, G. (1999). Dr. Martin Brokenleg - Families: Circles of courage, reclaiming our youth. Aboriginal Parent/Guardian Conference-School District #43, Port Moody, BC.
- Wright, J. (2008) Review of assessments for English as a second language (ESL) learners. British Columbia Ministry of Education.

<p>Social Constructivism</p>	<p>Instructional Strategies and Methods</p> <p><u>Interactive Instruction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussion • cooperative learning • peer partner learning • problem solving • brainstorming • interviewing • role playing <p><u>Indirect Instruction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inquiry • reading for meaning <p><u>Independent Study</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learning centers <p><u>Experiential Learning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • field trips • conducting experiments • storytelling • games • model building • imaging • imaging • observations 	<p>Collaborative Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common planning times for teachers to preview new math and writing programs • worked closely with ESL/D teacher to plan for instruction of students • read and discussed articles on language teaching and learning • implemented ESL/D practices in classroom teaching • shared successes and concerns about literacy lessons with other primary teacher • consulted with ESL/D teacher at the beginning and the end of the year to discuss students' progress 	<p>Learning Community Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present at chapter meetings with ESL/D teachers from a number of schools • attended a two-day workshop on ESL/D theory and practice with approximately twenty other interested teachers • attended primary teacher meetings focusing on reading and writing • served as a mentor to a new teacher • sponsored several student teachers during career, most recently in 2005 • share expertise and materials with colleagues
<p>Culturally Responsive Teaching</p>	<p><u>Culturally Responsive Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • colourful, inviting classroom with materials that students can relate to and are used to introduce new concepts • space and tables where students can work formally and independently • rocking chair, pillows and an area rug for discussion and informal activities • sharing basket for food • learning and interest centers for hands-on activities, listening and viewing • student involvement in desk arrangement and team composition 	<p>Shared Responsibility and Collaboration Between the Home and School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESL/D program • Communication between home and school through regular newsletters • Homework Club • participation in pot-luck events, Chinese New Year • sale of Indo-Canadian food (samosa) in the concession 	<p>Culturally Compatible District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cross-cultural teaching staff and administration • First Nation and Punjabi language classes • professional development opportunities that address issues of cultural diversity • district organized events such as Aboriginal Day, school performances featuring First Nation and Indo-Canadian talent
<p>APPENDIX A</p> <p>Summary of the Appreciative Inquiry</p>	<p><u>Culturally Responsive Curriculum</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities in September using personal artifacts to get to know students • unit in February (National Heritage Week) to learn about and show appreciation for each others' cultural backgrounds through multicultural literature and interviews • K-W-L strategy to build on students' background knowledge • discussions to access students' prior schema and help make them to make connections to literature • cooperative learning strategies • graphic organizers to assist with learning and thinking • varied assessment methods 	<p>Cultural Representation and Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nation aides, First Nation Liaison, Indo-Canadian and First Nation lunch-time supervisors • Artists-in-School presentations including First Nation dancing and drumming, Punjabi dancing/instruction • talent shows often featuring Indian dancing 	

APPENDIX B

TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONAL INVENTORY (Pre-study)

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES & METHODS

LEGEND			
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Little knowledge/ skill in this area	Basic	Proficient	Outstanding

Direct Instruction

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| OO●O Lecture | OO●O Practice & Drill |
| OO●O Demonstrations | OO●O Guided Writing |
| OO●O Guided & Shared Reading | OO●O Didactic Questioning |

Interactive Instruction

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| OO●O Discussion | OO●O Problem Solving |
| OO●O Cooperative Learning | OO●O Brainstorming |
| OO●O Peer Partner Learning | OO●O Interviewing |
| OO●O Role Playing | |

Indirect Instruction

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| OO●O Concept Formation | OO●O Inquiry |
| OO●O Concept Attainment | OO●O Reading for Meaning |
| OO●O Problem Solving | OO●O Concept Mapping |

Independent Study

OO●O Journals

OO●O Learning Logs

OO●O Reports

OO●O Learning Centers

OO●O Research Projects

OO●O Assigned Questions

Experiential Learning

O●OO Field Trips

OO●O Storytelling

OO●O Conducting Experiments

OO●O Games

OO●O Surveys

O●OO Model Building

OO●O Observations

O●OO Imaging

Teaching Tools

OOO● Audiovisual

OOO● Audio

O●OO PowerPoint

O●OO Blogging

Evaluation & Assessment Strategies

OO●O Pencil / Paper Tests

OO●O Learning Logs

OOO● Projects, Posters, Artwork

OO●O Skill Performance

OO●O Oral Presentation

OO●O Anecdotal Notes

OO●O Student / Teacher Conference

OO●O Rubrics

O●OO Student Self- assessment

O●OO Peer Feedback

APPENDIX C

TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONAL INVENTORY (Post-study)

O	O	O	O
Little knowledge/ skill in this area	Basic	Proficient	Outstanding

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES, METHODS & TACTICS

Direct Instruction		
OO●O Lecture	OO●O Practice & Drill	OO●O Demonstrations
OO●O Guided Writing	OO●O Questioning	OO●O Guided/Shared Reading
Interactive Instruction		
OO●● Discussion	OO●O Problem Solving	OO●● Cooperative Learning
OO●O Interviewing	OO●● Brainstorming	OO●O Peer Partners
OO●O Role Playing	OO●O Readers Theatre	OO●O Peer Scaffolding
Indirect Instruction		
OO●O Problem Solving	OO●O Inquiry	OO●O Reading for Meaning
OO●O Concept Mapping	OO●O Concept Attainment	
Independent Study		
OO●● Homework Calendar	OO●● Learning Centers	OO●O Journals
OO●O Research Projects	OO●O Learning Logs	OO●O Assigned Questions

Experiential Learning

○○○○ Field Trips

○○○○ Storytelling

○○○○ Games

○○○○ Experiments

○○○○ Observations

○○○○ Model Building

○○○○ Imaging

○○○○ Surveys

○○○○ Role Playing

Culturally Responsive Instruction

○○○○ Storytelling

○○○○ Imagery

○○○○ Cooperative Learning

○○○○ Semantic Webbing

○○○○ Graphic Organizers

○○○○ Word Banks

○○○○ Multicultural Content

○○○○ Wait Time

Oral Language Tactics

○○○○ Barrier Games

○○○○ Sequencing

○○○○ Vanishing Cloze

○○○○ Dictogloss

○○○○ Wallpapering

○○○○ Sound Bingo

Evaluation and Assessment

○○○○ Pencil / Paper Tests

○○○○ Learning Logs

○○○○ Projects, Posters

○○○○ Skill Performance

○○○○ Oral Presentation

○○○○ Anecdotal Notes

○○○○ Rubrics

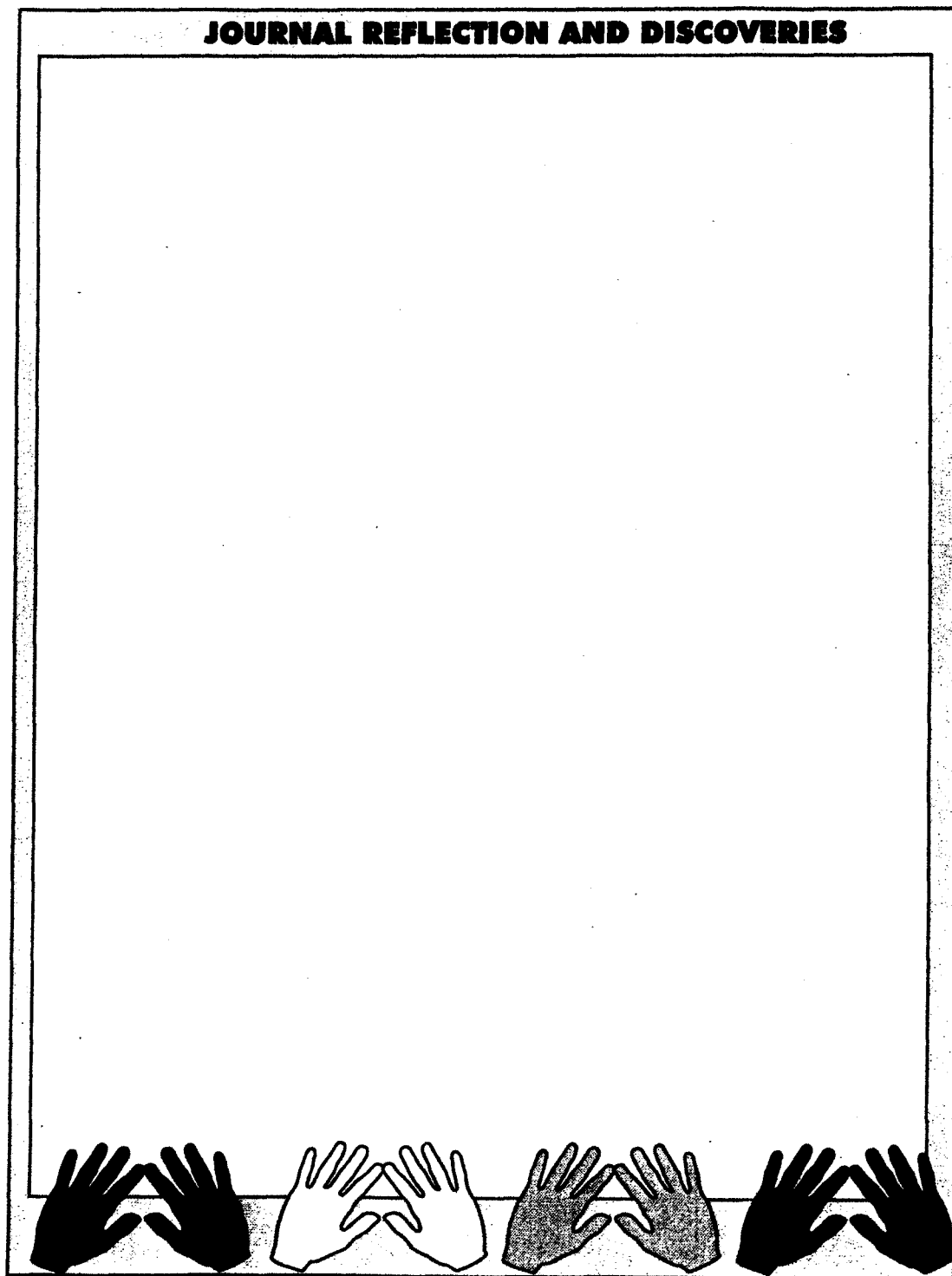
○○○○ Student / Teacher Conference

○○○○ Peer Feedback

○○○○ Student Self-Assessment

○○○○ Culturally Sensitive Feedback

APPENDIX D



Template from Shade, Kelly & Oberg (1997)

APPENDIX E

ACTION STEP MATRIX

Initial Action Step 1 Date:	Observations (what I saw)
Results of Action	
Implications	Subsequent Action Date: _____
	Results of Action
Reflections (what I think about what I saw)	Implications

APPENDIX F

ACTION STEP MATRIX

<p>Initial Action Step 1</p> <p>Date: April 27, 2007.</p> <p>Use popsicle sticks with students' names to encourage participation of all students in class meeting.</p>	<p>Observations</p> <p>(what I saw)</p> <p>Many of the same students hold back in a discussion offering no or minimal input.</p>
<p>Results of Action</p> <p>Most of the students whose sticks were chosen were willing to participate in the class meeting by contributing to the discussion.</p>	
<p>Implications</p> <p>After some students spoke once they felt finished. There needs to be more dialogue and discussion among the students and less teacher directed talk.</p>	<p>Subsequent Action</p> <p>Date: May 4, 2007.</p> <p>Each student was given their stick and once they participated in the meeting they handed the stick to me.</p>
<p>Reflections</p> <p>(what I think about what I saw)</p> <p>This could be just another form of spotlighting and may cause greater discomfort to those students who are reluctant to participate.</p>	<p>Results of Action</p> <p>The same students avoided speaking out in the group even with prompting.</p> <p>Implications</p> <p>I need to look for another way to encourage total group participation.</p>

APPENDIX G

ACTION STEP MATRIX

<p>Initial Action Step 1</p> <p>Date: May 4, 2007.</p> <p>Two other primary teachers and I met to discuss a new writing program and resources available to support it.</p>	<p>Observations</p> <p>(what I saw)</p> <p>There seems to be a lack of flexibility and consideration for any one else's program as one colleague feels she can tell two others which books she uses and therefore others can't. When I spoke up and said we all should have some choice in what resources we would use, her response was, "Then I won't be using the program".</p>
<p>Results of Action</p> <p>One of the teachers was upset with me using a book that she reads to her class. I happen to have a split class and she a straight. She then mentioned how frustrated she was over Science units that I had chosen to use.</p>	<p>Subsequent Action</p> <p>Date: May 7, 2007.</p> <p>We met again to talk about non-fiction writing. I asked to borrow a grade level reader in her class to read a story to my class and she became extremely upset saying she had been more than flexible and slammed the readers down on a desk.</p>
<p>Implications</p> <p>I can either plan my program around what she doesn't want to use or suffer the wrath. It appears that it is my job to accommodate although having the split class and two Science curricula.</p>	<p>Results of Action</p> <p>I left her classroom and went to a friend/colleague who recommended another book for my reading lesson. I had a great Sort and Predict activity the next day.</p> <p>Implications</p> <p>I need to choose other books, if possible and respect other teachers "prized" units. By being flexible I can expand my resource base and acknowledge other people's needs. It is also important not to diminish the capacity of the learning community.</p>
<p>Reflections</p> <p>(what I think about what I saw)</p> <p>I have decided to rise above and not dance around. (Look beyond their fault and see their need. WB) It seems to be one part teacher possessiveness, "one upmanship" mixed with insecurity. I feel like I am in a "no-win" situation, being criticized and accused of sabotaging another teachers' program.</p>	

APPENDIX H

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD

MEMORANDUM

To: Leah Moe
CC: Willow Brown

From: Henry Harder, Chair
Research Ethics Board

Date: April 26, 2007

Re: **E2007.0326.039**
Meeting the Literacy Needs of a Diverse Group of Students in the Regular Classroom

Thank you for submitting the above-noted research proposal to the Research Ethics Board. Your proposal has been approved.

We are pleased to issue approval for the above named study for a period of 12 months from the date of this letter. Continuation beyond that date will require further review and renewal of REB approval. Any changes or amendments to the protocol or consent form must be approved by the Research Ethics Board.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Henry Harder

APPENDIX I

School District Consent Form



Board of School Trustees

School District No. 27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin)

350 North 2nd Avenue
Williams Lake, BC
V2G 1Z9

Phone: 250 398-3800
Fax: 250 392-3600

April 18, 2007

Ms. Leah Moe
c/o Nesika Elementary
1180 Moon Avenue
Williams Lake, BC
V2G 4A6

Dear Ms. Moe,

I reviewed your synopsis of your UNBC MEd Thesis Study Proposal and the accompanying parental letters and consent forms. As I understand your study proposal, you will be utilizing a variety of instructional strategies and practices to meet the diverse learning needs of the children in your grade 2/3 class around literacy. Based on a reflective analysis, collaborative discussion with your colleagues and literacy assessment data, it is your intent to delineate which instructional strategies and practices best address the literacy needs of your students.

If your findings around instructional strategies and practices are shared with your teaching colleagues, I believe it would be an excellent professional development opportunity for those teachers. If arrangements were subsequently made for teachers to learn and employ the most promising practices that your study identifies, there is the possibility that student learning around literacy could be increased.

Sincerely,

Wayne Leckie
Superintendent of Schools

APPENDIX J

Principal Consent Form

UNBC MEd Thesis Study School Principal Consent Form for
Meeting the Literacy Needs of a Diverse Group of Students in the Regular Classroom

I, Steve Dickens, do agree to allow Leah Moe to conduct research in her classroom for her MEd thesis as described in the attached proposal. My signature below indicates my permission that these data may be used for a Master's research study as described in the letter.

Signature: 

Date: April 4 '07

It will be interesting to watch Mrs. Moe's journey into this literacy area.

I appreciate her desire for self improvement, for risk taking and especially for her drive to continually provide the best educational practice for her students. This study will benefit all teachers and students in areas of multiple ethnicities.

I wish Mrs. Moe the best of luck in her endeavors and will provide all the support possible.

APPENDIX K

Parent Consent Form

UNBC MEd Thesis Study Parent Consent Form for

Meeting the Literacy Needs of a Diverse Group of Students in the Regular Classroom

Please return this portion of the letter to the school by _____.

I, _____, do give my permission for my child, _____
Parent's name child's name

to participate in the MEd study as described in the attached letter by Leah Moe.

My signature below indicates my permission that these data may be used for a Master's research study as outlined in the letter.

Signature: _____ date: _____

APPENDIX L

UNFINISHED SENTENCES

1. Sometimes I like to _____.
2. Last summer I _____.
3. I hope I'll never _____.
4. When I read I _____.
5. My friend likes to _____.
6. I often worry about _____.
7. The best thing about school is _____.
8. Someday I want to _____.
9. The person I like best is _____.
10. I wish someone would _____.
11. Learning to read is _____.
12. My favorite television show is _____.
13. The worst thing about school is _____.
14. I have fun when _____.
15. The biggest problem with reading is _____.
16. After school I like to _____.
17. I wish my teacher would _____.
18. My eyes are _____.
19. I wish I would be able to read _____.
- If I had three wishes I would wish for _____.

APPENDIX M

ESD Strategies

Barrier Games- are communicative games that are usually played in pairs, and involve solving a problem of some sort. They involve an information gap, whereby each player has different information that both need if they are to solve the problem. A feature of these games is that players should not be able to see the other player's information. For example, Describe and Draw is a barrier game in which each child in a pair takes a turn to describe something that he or she has drawn. His or her partner then has to draw the same thing.

Character Containers – is an activity designed to help students gain a deeper understanding of the characters in a book by having them create containers and symbols for their characters. Using plasticene the containers are made to represent who the character is and what the character values.

Dictigloss – is a technique that is designed to develop listening skills, but it is also integrates speaking, reading, and writing. The teacher reads a short passage twice at normal speed. The students just listen; they don't write anything down at this point. The teacher reads the passage a third time at normal speed, and this time while the teacher is reading, the students write down as much as they can, as fast as they can. They should not try to write in sentences, just key words and phrases. Handwriting and spelling are not important at his stage. Then in pairs, the students compare and discuss the individual notes they have written. Together, they try to begin to reconstruct the original text they

heard. Two pairs of students then join to make a group of four. They repeat the same process, again adding to and adapting their notes. At this stage individual students can write out the passage based on the group notes or the group can do it together. Give them time to check their writing, such as grammar and spelling. Then compare the original text on an overhead with the student passages. The objective of the activity is not produce an identical text to the original, but to produce a text that has the same information and is appropriately worded.

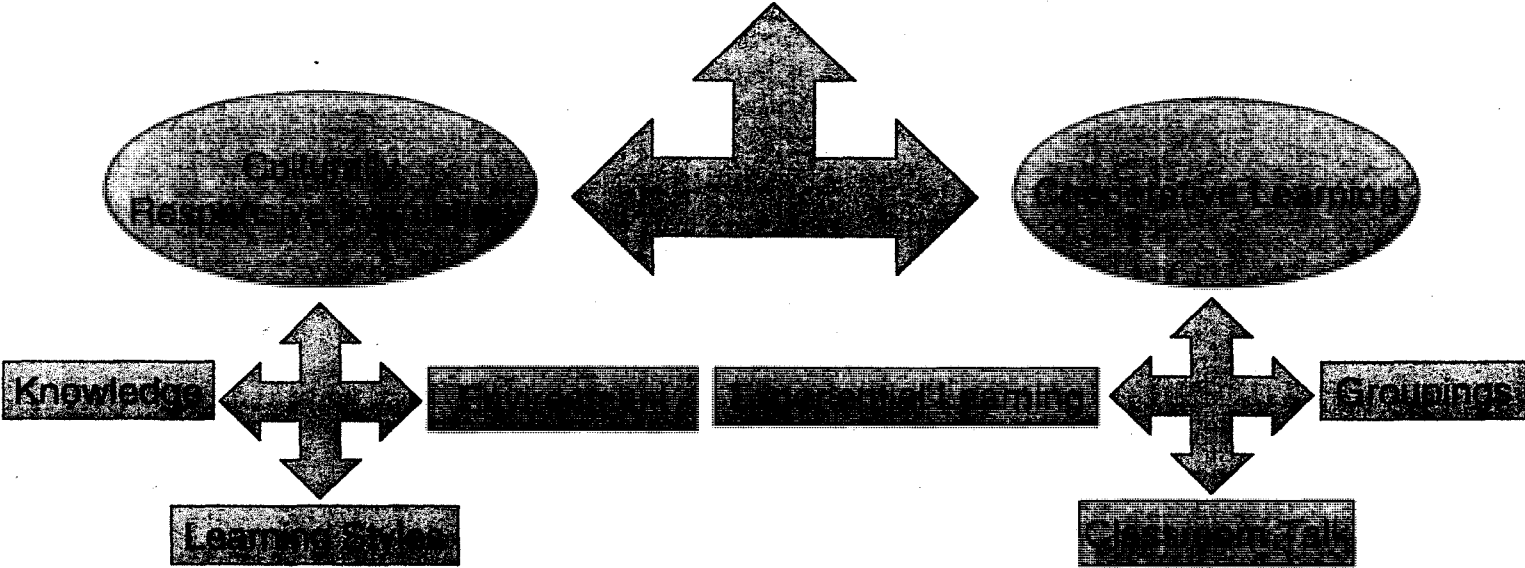
Eye-to-Eye/Knee-to-Knee – this strategy encourages students to participate more actively in the learning process, sharing their thinking and communicating their ideas to a partner. It is similar to the Think/Pair/Share strategy.

Vanishing Cloze – In this activity a short passage is written on the board. Students read it aloud together. Erase one or two words from the passage. Students read it again, putting back the missing words. Erase another few words and repeat the process. Continue until all the words are removed so that students are now reading from memory. These repeated readings are especially helpful if the text contains subject-specific vocabulary that the students are currently learning. It provides a context for repetition that is both fun and challenging.

Strategies are from Brownlie, 2005 and Gibbons, 2002.

APPENDIX N

A Social and Collaborative View of Language Learning



APPENDIX O

